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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

TELEVISION AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY: STEREOTYPING OF AGING

BY

JEAN MARIE AGRIOS (C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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Michael W. Gillespie

Supervisor

Brendan J. Rule

Date June 16, 1989

DEDICATION

To my family, for many reasons, my husband

JACK N. AGRIOS

my daughters,

JANICE AND SUSAN AGRIOS

and my mother,

ANNA KUZIO

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this thesis is to determine the effects of television on stereotyping of elderly people, in terms of problems attributed to them. This study examines some theoretical propositions drawn from a synthesis of the construction of social reality theory and cultivation hypothesis. The theoretical perspective includes three types of reality: objective, subjective and symbolic. Objective social reality factors include demographic variables, such as age and education. Indicators of subjective social reality are operationalized on a close-remote continuum, based on their distance from everyday life experiences of the individual. They included items related to contact with elderly persons, perceptions of television portrayals of elderly people, psychological well-being and life satisfaction. Television effects, measured in terms of amount of TV watched, are conceptualized as symbolic social reality in the research model. The data set used for this study and in previous research is the Harris (1975) survey, the Myth and Reality of Aging.

This thesis proposes a new index as a measure of stereotyping of elderly people. The discrepancy of problems attributed to elderly persons by those under 65 years of age and problems actually experienced by them is the major criterion for this index. Five hypotheses were developed and tested by means of regression analyses. The most significant findings indicate that: 1. Contrary to previous findings, those who watched the most television, stereotype elderly persons the least. 2. The effects of TV watching are greatest for those with a neutral perception of television's portrayal of elderly people. Light viewers in this category stereotype the most, while heavy viewers with the same perception stereotype the least. 3. Individuals who have a great deal of contact with elderly family members attribute the most serious problems to elderly people. 4. Respondents with high levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction are less likely to stereotype in all age groups. 5. Psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and contact with elderly persons, in

terms of help given with problems, show no interaction effects on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping of elderly people. 6. Younger viewers, that is those associated with the TV generation, are more likely to stereotype. 7. Contrary to previous findings, individuals with a higher education are more likely to stereotype.

The conclusion includes a summary of the general implication of this thesis, some theoretical considerations, methodological considerations and a number of recommendations for future research.

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I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A. INTRODUCTION

For many years, the potentially profound influence of the media on individual and collective consciousness has interested social scientists. Some researchers believe that the media can play an important part in shaping the knowledge which people have of their own life and the "more remote contexts of their lives" (McQuail, 1972:13). If the media can influence society, they can also act as reflectors of societal values or norms, thereby reinforcing the status quo. It is this dual role of the media that has been a long-standing subject for both research and debate.

The effect of television as a medium of influence has been the subject of a great deal of controversy. The differing opinions range from Gerbner's belief that television is a "wholesale distributor" of attitudes which have a powerful effect on our social reality to the belief that television has a very small indirect effect limited to certain groups of people (Passuth & Cook, 1975). It is generally acknowledged that media tools such as radio, newspapers, books, films, and magazines allow individuals to choose what they want to hear or read. In contrast, as television is watched by the clock, individuals do not have such choices. Prime time television presents a world that seems realistic, but in fact contains many biases and distortions, with program content aimed at those who purchase most of the consumer products. One example of these biases and distortions is the underrepresentation of minorities, women, the young and the old. In addition to underrepesentation, research suggests that television presents negative and unrealistic images of these groups.

In the past twenty years action has been taken to eliminate the negative stereotypes of minorities and women. The visibility and image of these groups on television have been the subject of a number of investigations, whereas the visibility and image of certain age sub-groups, particularly elderly individuals, have not received the same attention. In the middle and late 1960's audiences began to see many more blacks and ethnics on television, with character portrayals becoming more realistic and positive. Similar changes in regard to women occurred following the feminist movement in the 1970's. Even though television has made noticeable progress in relation to race and gender, changes with regard to aging only started in the late 1970's and continued into the 1980's.

Aging has become the important social issue of the 80s, just as racism and sexism were of the 60s and 70s. Maddox (1979;120) believed that ageism would join "racism and sexism as a political issue, though the precise age involved [would be] subject to negotiation and varying degrees of consensus". Although aging has become an important issue for the 80's, the aged are still grossly underrepresented on television. Only 2% of the characters on television represent elderly persons. In addition, less than 1% of all published television research articles are concerned with the aged (Kubey, 1982; 16). A number of studies of television portrayals of elderly individuals suggests that television often presents inaccurate representations that reinforce negative societal myths of aging even though television is the only medium in which use increases with age, (Schlossberg, 1982;21). In spite of the fact that they are underrepresented, and according to the literature portrayed negatively, older viewers are the most faithful watchers.

Aging, which is continuous and universal, is a broad public concern as all people are subject to growing old. In addition, elderly peoeple represent an increasingly large and significant segment of our society with more average leisure time than other groups. In 1950, people 65 years and older made up just 7.7% of the population, while at the present

time, they account for 12% of the population (1985 U.S. census). The predictions for 2020 are that 17.3% will be 65 years and older, with those 85 years and over making up the fastest growing group (Atchley,1988;18). In 1975, when the data to be used for this study were released, 11% of the population was 65 year and older. At that same time, only 2.3% of the population on television was 65 years and older suggesting a substantial gap (Gerbner et al, 1979;5).

Though the general public tends to look at older people as a homogeneous entity, Harris and his associates (1975) found that their study showed differences among older people. Social, economic and psychological factors that affect individuals when they are younger, tend to stay with them throughout their lives. In other words, there appears to be no such thing as the typical experience of being an elderly person, other than the fact that individuals in this age cohort have all reached their 65th birthday. In spite of Harris' findings that the general public showed a lack of sensitivity to individual differences among older people, most of the questions in his survey referred to the category of people over 65 as if they were a "unitary entity" (Shaver, 1978;106). The Harris survey showed that approximately one half of the respondents used a particular age rather than a judgment of function as their criteria for "when the average man/woman becomes old (Harris, 1975;22). The difficulty is that many respondents would fail to distinguish older people if age were not used as a criteria.

Harris (1975) also found that although older people as a group may suffer from a number of problems, their self image is far better than the image attributed to them by the general public. A discrepancy exists between problems that are attributed to elderly people and problems actually experienced elderly people. This discrepancy could relate to the failure to expect individual differences among elderly individuals. This finding will form

the basis for the stereotyping criteria for this study. The primary emphasis will be to examine the effect of television on stereotyping of elderly people.

Television and aging is a relatively new area of research that started about 25 years ago, however, systematic and continuous research appearing only in the late 70's. Related research studies have often been descriptive, rather than explanatory and most of the research has focused on content analytic studies. Content analysis, however, needs to progress beyond quantitative and qualitative assessments to consider whether the content and portrayals actually affect the audience (Rubin, 1982;549). There has only been one study (Gerbner et al, 1980) and a critique of that study (Passuth and Cook, 1985) that addresses the issue of the elderly characters on television and audience effects. This thesis proposes to expand on this research using a new stereotyping measure that is based on the discrepancy between the image of old age held by the population under 65 years of age and the image of old age held by those over 65. Like Gerbner et al (1980) and Passuth and Cook (1985), this thesis will use the Harris (1975) data "The Myth and Reality of Aging".

Due to the controversy that television appears to be influential under some conditions while not under others, the primary purpose of this study will be to explore the conditional role of television on stereotyping of elderly people, using the new measure of stereotyping. The social construction of reality perspective will provide the theoretical framework and will be discussed in detail in Chapter II.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Stereotyping of Aging and the Aged Studies

Some researchers have suggested that stereotyping is related to loss of productive roles associated with retirement, decline in health, and institutionalization (Kuypers & Bengston, 1973). Negative stereotyping of elderly people, includes beliefs that old people are relatively unproductive workers, suffer declines in IQ, are emotional and financial "drags" on their adult children, prefer to and do live with their children, have lost sexual capacities, suffer from despair and anxiety and are often institutionalized by uncaring family (Hess, 1974;77). Bader, (1980;9) believed that such negative attitudes of old age as a time of uselessness and incompetence could become self fulfilling.

Lutsky (1980;327) in a review of literature on attitudes toward old age and elderly persons, found that while a number of misconceptions and negative beliefs were held, old age and elderly persons were seldom viewed in a strongly negative fashion. In contrast to the gerontological literature of the 50's and the 60's where stereotypes traditionally assigned negative attributes to aging (Brubaker and Powers, 1976), Lutsky believed that gerontologist, studying attitudes in the 80's, could not assume that negative attitudes are held. He indicated that the mean of all the studies he reviewed would probably be "neutral". While people tended to overemphasize the problems of old age, Lutsky also found that old people attributed more serious problems to other old people than to themselves. Labouvie-Vief and Baltes (1976) found that negative attitudes expressed by young respondents toward old people, reflected a lack of information rather than hostility or antagonism. When the young respondents were asked to simulate the answers of old people, they responded quite similarly to older respondents, indicating that they appear to know intellectually about aging and old age.

One of the "most substantial sources of (scientific) information on public beliefs about old age and elderly persons" was the survey of Louis Harris and Associates for the National Council on Aging released in 1975. (Lutsky, 1980;293). The study, Myth and Reality of Aging (Harris et al, 1974) involved a representative sample of 4,254 person aged 18 years and over interviewed in 1974 with an oversample of elderly respondents. We use the answers of elderly respondents about old people to represent the "reality", whereas the answers about old people, of those under 65, represent the "myth". The data and sample will be discussed in more detail in Chapter IV, part B.

Data from this survey have been used in a number of studies, with stereotyping being operationalized in relation to knowledge of and attitudes toward elderly persons. Gerbner et al (1979) used a knowledge and attitude index to examine stereotyping of elderly persons in relation to television. The knowledge index included answers to three items related to longevity, health, and the number of older persons compared to 10 or 20 years ago. These items, they suggested, can be characterized as measuring knowledge because each has an empirically correct answer. Gerbner et al (1980) found that heavy viewers had less knowledge. They felt this lack of knowledge was related to their findings of underrepresentation of elderly characters on television. In examining this knowledge index some methodological problems, in relation to reliability and face validity, were discovered. These problems will be discussed in more detail in Chapters III and IV.

The second set of stereotyping variables consisted of five attitude items asking to what extent old people are wise from experience, physically active, good at getting things done, bright and alert, and open minded and adaptable. Their findings indicated that the more people, and especially young people, watch television, the more they tend to perceive old people in negative and unfavorable terms (Gerbner et al, 1979:21). As we shall see later, this index presents methodological problems of discriminant validity in that it tends to

reflects self attitudes. The responses relate to the image of individuals over 65 years rather than the state of being old. This is discussed in more detail in Chapters III and IV.

Passuth and Cook (1985) criticized Gerbner et al for their choice of items to measure stereotyping. They suggested that all relevant survey items that could measure stereotyping were not examined by Gerbner et al. Following Lutsky's suggestions, more recent literature has focused on "beliefs about older people's problems versus their actual experiences. Atchley (1988;261) suggested that the general public over estimated the prevalence of problems of aging such as poor health, inadequate income, loneliness, keeping busy and poor housing. While such beliefs perpetuate stereotyping of aging as a negative life stage, they are often difficult to study in that they tend to be specific. In addition they are sometimes accurate, sometimes inaccurate, while at other times they cannot be judged because related research has not been done. However, research into these beliefs is important as it addresses the state of old age rather than old people. The present analysis will examine items related to beliefs about problems from the Harris (1975) survey, as the criteria for the stereotyping.

Elderly People on Television - Content Analysis Studies

Content analysis, involves monitoring of television programming by researchers to assess the *frequency of appearance* and the *quality of image* of a particular group on television. However, in a medium as complex as television, it is difficult to generalize how aging is portrayed. As a result, these assessments are sometimes difficult to make (Atchley, 1988;265). For instance, estimates of the proportion of elderly characters on nighttime television range from 1.5% to 13%, suggesting a rather divergent estimate for a very specific area of programming. This relates to the fact that the elderly characters are sometimes difficult to identify, and the results are affected by the criteria used in selecting elderly characters. In some cases the researcher must guess the TV character's age

(Atchley, 1988;265). In spite of such difficulties, content analysis, with its shortcomings, is the best known method for assessing the 'frequency and quality' of appearance of a particular group on television.

Content analyses have shown that the lower the status of a particular sub-group, the lower the visibility of that group on television and the less favorable the image when that sub-group is visible (Kubey, 1980;21). For example, in the 1970's there were fewer major roles for women. When women were shown, they were passive, dependent, submissive, and weak, while men were presented as strong, dominant, rational, independent and active. (Seggar, 1975). Prior to the women's liberation movement and the revival of feminism, a 1964 study of occupations presented on television, found that the world of work on television was a man's world with 83.9% of the workers male and only 16.1% female (De Fleur, 1964). More than a decade later, even though more women worked outside the home, women were still frequently confined to home environments on television. However, changes were evident and there was a trend toward less bias (Downs, 1981;256).

The visibility and image of age sub-groups, particularly elderly people, have received much less attention than that of sex sub-groups. Some of the studies reviewed in relation to old people showed methodological problems such as a low number of observations and the use of only one rater thereby creating subjective data. For instance, Peterson (1973) did her own rating on only 30 half hour time slots chosen from prime-time commercial television for a one week period. She hypothesized that the aged would be underrepresented and portrayed negatively on television. Her hypotheses were based on the assumption that being old conferred lower status than being young. Neither of her hypotheses was supported by her findings as she found television portrayals of elderly characters to be quite positive. In fact, she found 92.9% of the old people on television to

be active, 82.1% to be in good health, and 82.1% to be independent. She did, however, find a startling underrepresentation of older women who in reality made up a larger proportion of the population than men of the same age. Her study suggested that a viewer could expect to see an old man on prime time television every 22 minutes, and an old woman every 4 or 5 hours. Her conclusion was that "it is a man's world for the elderly" on TV.

Aronoff (1974) found that elderly prime-time television characters made up only one-half of their actual population and that most older characters were negatively portrayed. Older men outnumbered older women nearly three to one. This high proportion of males was consistent in all age groups on television. The average age of females was estimated as ten years younger than males. Only 10% of older females compared with 40% of older males were shown as "successful, happy or good". Males in prime-time drama failed because they were "evil", while women failed because of age. Aronoff's study was based on data pertaining to 2,741 elderly characters in prime time network television drama sampled between 1969 and 1971. His study is more reliable than the Peterson study (1973) because he used almost four times as many ratings.

Northcott (1975) concentrated only on characters with role portrayals lasting two minutes or longer. His findings showed that only 1.5% appeared to be over 64 years of age, in contrast to the actual population where 10.1% were over 64 as reported by the U.S. census in 1973. The adult category of 30-54 years of age represented 64.4% of the television population but only 28.1% of the population in the real world. In addition to underrepresentation, Northcott found that negative dialogue about aging was three times as prevalent as positive dialogue. He agreed with Aronoff 's findings (1974), that television males outnumbered television females almost three to one.

Hess (1974) in a study of stereotyping of old people focused on television commercials and reported that advertisers, in particular, tend to ignore old people as this age group is associated with limited consumer power. Newsweek in a feature story about Gerbner et al's (1980) work, relating to stereotyping of elderly people, suggested that TV's distortions all relate to demographics. Demographically advertisers do not want to reach the poor, "the elderly", and certain minorities (Newsweek, December 6, 1982). Prime time sponsors want to reach the white middle class male 18-49 year of age, that is, the audience that purchases the most consumer products (Henry, 1980;152). This group forms the major portion of the employed generation and controls most of the social and economic resources (Bader, 1980;3). Changes will occur only when the elderly group becomes larger and has a higher consumer dollar. Davis and Kubey (1981;205) commented that as industry and television "attend to the demographic shifts in our society", programming will reflect a new awareness as no industry can afford to ignore potential customers.

Recent findings are contradictory. Kubey (1980;28), relating to commercials and advertising, suggested that changes in content, in television commercial advertising, were evident due to the increasing number of elderly persons who command a growing purchasing power. Heimstra et al (1983) agreed that elderly people have grown in size and consumer power. However, they found that there was still a significant absence of elderly characters in commercial advertising. They found that only 11 out of 358 characters in 136 commercials appeared to be 60 years or older.

Harris and Feinberg's (1977) study, one of the few studies to examine the image of the aged in all types of programming, concluded that the problem of the older person on television was one of quality rather than of quantity. Programs were selected at random over a six week period from all seven days of the week. Their findings showed that, contrary to other research, the proportion of older characters in commercials generally

matched the proportions of older people in the general population, however the picture of the aged was primarily "unflattering, unhealthy, unstylish and uninteresting". Elderly people were substantially overrepresented in commercials relating to health aids and were generally shown to have more health problems. Schlossberg's (1982;22) findings in relation to television commercials supported Harris and Feinberg and in addition found old characters in television drama to be "remarkably one-dimensional", with a very narrow range of emotions. By contrast, Harris and Feinberg (1977) found that news and talk shows presented the greatest percentages of old people, showing them as business leaders, politicians or respected actors and artists. On these shows the older male's image was most positive in terms of "authority" and "esteem". The variety of programs included in the Harris and Feinberg study altered the frequency ratio of appearances leading to the conclusion that old people were not underrepresented. This underlines the importance of choices of programming for analysis.

The most extensive and detailed content analysis of prime-time and weekend-daytime programming was a study by Gerbner and his associates (1979) conducted from 1969 through to 1978 based on 1,365 programs and 16,688 characters. Their Message System Analysis consisted of periodic content analysis by pairs of highly trained observers. Detailed records were made about certain aspects of program content in which there was an elderly character. The focus was on major characters, that is those who portrayed roles essential to the plot, and minor characters, those with all other speaking parts who were in the program. Their data was subjected to reliability tests to insure that the observations reflected the material being studied, rather than observer bias.

Gerbner et al (1979;26), in their content analyses, found that "watching television was not associated with any positive images of older people". Their findings were that older people 'are not romantically involved, not sexually active, not bright or alert, but

rather are rigid, close minded, inept and bumbling'. In comparison to younger characters, older characters were generally presented as foolish, more eccentric and more likely to be treated with disrespect (Gerbner et al, 1980). Gerbner, also found that underrepresentation was a problem and suggested that viewers were likely to learn from television that older people were either insignificant or disappearing. On the other hand, two positive characterizations did emerge. One was that elderly characters were portrayed as more useful and the other was that loneliness among the aged was less common than in other age groups.

Harris (1975) concluded that even though the public held a negative and distorted image of old people, public opinion of television's presentation of old people was considered to be relatively benign. That is, the general public felt that while television had not played a positive role in improving the image of elderly people, it had in no way been negative. Kubey (1980;24) criticized Harris' conclusion that uncritical public opinion of television's portrayal of elderly people could be equated with not being negative. He suggested that society's apparent ignorance in relation to the types of TV images revealed by content analyses, reflected society's ignorance of aging. Kubey (1980) believed that old people were sometimes "relative outcasts" in the television world because they did not always fit well into the established and comfortable cultural values promoted by the medium. Television, according to Kubey, should move toward a more realistic view of old age regardless of how the public sees the presentation.

Kubey (1980;22) also criticized positive findings such as those of Peterson (1973) suggesting that these highly positive images of old people on television often constitute "reversed stereotyping". Reversed stereotyping occurs when "older characters [are] seen riding on motorcycles, performing modern dances with great abandon", or when reference is made to their prolific sex life. Situations of reversed stereotyping, he felt, did more

harm than good as such images of elderly people were meant as jokes, thereby reinforcing negative images. He concluded that both the visibility and image of older people could be improved and that the extremely poor image of older women on television was related to sex role as well as age stereotyping.

The studies reviewed show the inconsistencies in findings that exist in relation to television and old people. Although content analytic studies provide a relatively complete method for assessing the quantity and quality of television's presentation of older people, this method also presents several methodological problems, some of which have already been discussed. It is evident from some of the studies reviewed, such as Harris and Feinberg (1977), that the results depend on the type of programming being studied in addition to how and when the content analyses are done. Another important consideration, which is difficult to measure, is the rater's biases toward old people. The sampling of program content frequently misses the context of the characterization and we are dependent on the rater's decision. If the researcher is not "prepared to find positive outcomes, this is often reflected in the categories and in the research results." (Atchley, 1988;265). Content analysis has further limitations in that it focuses primarily on manifest content rather than underlying latent content. The latent dimension of the media message relates to images of old age and ultimately to 'self' which reminds us of "role loss, deprivation and our ultimate demise" (Hess, 1974;80). This dimension is very difficult to study empirically.

In order to understand the link between television content and the effects of television on stereotyping, other methods of study must be considered as well. Studies related to these methods will be described in subsequent sections.

Cultivation Analysis Studies

Content analysis examines the television-world view, while cultivation analysis provides a potential link as to how this television-world view can affect beliefs and attitudes. Cultivation hypothesis argues that television has a major influence on people's beliefs and that "heavy viewers incorporate biases present in television content into their own constructions of reality." (Hawkins & Pingree, 1980;193). In other words, the more you watch TV, the more likely you are to have the television-world view.

Most of the research in cultivation analysis has focused on the cultivation effects of television on individual's perceptions of violence. Through answers to survey questions, Gerbner et al. (1978, 1979) believed that persons who were heavy viewers adopted television's message and as a result had a distorted view of the world as more violent than it really is. They suggested that since television violence is so frequent, violence could be seen in social reality as appropriate behavior. These findings have been the subject of a great deal of controversy and criticism, in the mass media and related journals, by researcher such as Hughes (1980) and Hirsch (1980, 1981 a,b). As cultivation analysis will be part of the methodology used for this study, a brief discussion of the controversy will follow.

Hughes (1980;299) criticized Gerbner et al's work and argued that since television presents a "wide variety of overt and covert messages, some violent, some not, it is not entirely obvious what the 'television answer' to a particular survey question should be." Hirsch (1980;449) also criticized Gerbner et al's studies (1978; 1979) on violence and television indicating that less than .10 of the variance was explained by the predictor variables in multivariate analysis. He equated such a low R-square to a non-finding and suggested it was definitely not reportable as a positive result. Such a "non-finding" led Hirsch (1980;450) to question cultivation hypothesis, which he described as an "ironic

distortion of the 'real world' data analysis." In addition, Hirsch criticized the demographic profile of heavy viewers. He suggested that they were mainly housewives, "the elderly" and those in poor health, indicating that viewer availability was a key prior determinant of viewing behavior. Although, Gerbner et al (1981) replied to these criticisms, many points still remain unresolved. Gerbner et al. (1980) and Passuth and Cook (1985), in a critique of Gerbner et al, are the only researchers to examine cultivation effects of television in relation to old people. As this analysis will relate to these studies, a detailed review of their research will follow. In addition, comments about their research will be made throughout this study when it is considered relevant and appropriate.

Based on their content analyses, Gerbner et al (1980) argued that television presents a negative and distorted view of elderly people . Their related cultivation studies led them to believe that the more time one spends watching television the more likely one is to have such views. Using data from the Myth and Reality of Aging (1975), they conducted regression analyses to determine whether there was a relationship between television viewing, and knowledge of and attitudes toward elderly people. They controlled for the respondent's age, race, income, and education, life satisfaction, and psychological well-being. Television viewing was measured with two questions. The first measure related to hours of television viewing yesterday and the second related to amount of television viewing. An additional measure was a TV index which was a combination of these two variables. Gerbner et al (1980) concluded that heavy viewers believe that "the number, health and longevity of older people are declining and that older persons are not open-minded and adaptable, bright and alert, or good at getting things done."

Passuth and Cook (1985) believed that Gerbner et al's findings could erroneously lead to the conclusion that if television portrayal of elderly people were to change, a change in attitude and knowledge would follow. They criticized Gerbner et al (1980) for

controlling for the selected variables individually, instead of using multiple controls simultaneously. Using the same data and sample, they found that when simultaneous controls were added, television viewing did not appear to be a major contributor to the development of knowledge and attitudes about elderly people. The impact of television was limited to certain groups. In relation to knowledge about elderly people, they found significant effects only for respondents 18-29, the generation that has grown up with television. For this group, the hours of television viewing were inversely related to scores on the knowledge index; the more an individual watches television, the less knowledge he/she has of elderly people. In relation to attitudes, television viewing showed no significant effects for any age group. Passuth and Cook (1985) therefore concluded that the negative effects of television are overstated.

Cultivation hypothesis was criticized because it was felt that some individuals had the television-world view regardless of how much TV they watched. As a result, modifications were made and Gerbner et al presented mainstreaming hypothesis. The basis of mainstreaming is that, "heavy television viewing should channel beliefs into the television-world view only among social groups that do not already subscribe to that view" (Passuth & Cook, 1985;70). While mainstreaming is sometimes difficult to test as there needs to be a control group of individuals who do not have the television-world view, it is mentioned here in relation to the criticisms of cultivation hypothesis. Passuth and Cook (1985), in testing mainstreaming hypothesis, found the evidence for mainstreaming to be inconsistent in relation to attitude toward old people.

Since a test of mainstreaming hypothesis requires parallel data, which is not available, only cultivation analysis will be examined. Even though there are limitations, this is the only method which provides a link from content analysis to audience effects. Because many factors need to be considered and explored in order to put television's role in

perspective, this study will examine television viewing as only one factor that affects images of old age and aging. The effects of a number of other factors such as for example, personal contact with elderly people, will be examined as well.

Social construction of reality studies will be reviewed in the next section to provide a preview of how this theoretical framework can and has been related to television viewing. These studies show social construction of reality as a current and potentially effective approach to the study of television effects on a wide variety of subjects and related television effects.

Construction of Social Reality and Television Studies

Because there was only one study relating social construction of reality to elderly people on television, this section will examine studies relating television to a variety of subjects. Hawkins and Pingree (1982;227) reviewed 24 studies, from 1977 to 1980, related to social construction of reality and found that 17 showed significant positive relationships, 5 showed no relationship, and 2 were disputed. On the other hand, they indicated that if we look to the 12 researchers involved in these studies, more than half of them believed that the relationship between television viewing and social reality was spurious. In an earlier review, Hawkins & Pingree (1981;349) suggested that while most studies show a link between television viewing and beliefs, other factors must be considered.

Measuring social reality effects presents some methodological problems which should be recognized. For example, certain social and psychological characteristics influence individuals to view particular types of content. The chosen content in turn cultivates or strengthens those characteristics. This dialectic process must be recognized; one should not assume that a positive correlation between television viewing and social

reality reflects change by heavy television viewers (Hawkins and Pingree 1982;225). In addition, demonstrating the effects of television viewing on individual's social reality must take into account such factors as lack of unexposed groups, causal ordering, and control of third variables to discover whether or not the relationship is an artifact of a third variable. These factors will be considered in interpreting the results of this study. They are also important consideration for all studies in the social sciences.

The early research in television and social construction of reality related to violence, including fearfulness (usually of walking alone at night) and perceived prevalence of violence. (Doob & Macdonald, 1979; Hawkins & Pingree, 1980; Gerbner et al 1978, 1979). More recent studies have focused on the link between television and gender, (Zemach & Cohen, 1986); television and perception of blacks (Allen & Hatchett, 1985); television and crime news reporting (O,Keefe & Reid-Nash, 1987), and television and beliefs about elderly people, (Gerbner et al, 1980), which has already been discussed in relation to cultivation analysis. A brief description of some of these studies will follow.

Doob & Macdonald (1979) in a study of fear of victimization, with Canadian adults, reported the result for a series of questions about the nature and frequency of crime and violence. For a majority of the questions, they reported significant relationships to television viewing. These relationship did not change when the area, in which the subject resided, was controlled for, suggesting that real-world differences in the actual level of crime do not mediate this relationship. This appears to support cultivation hypothesis, however Doob and Macdonald did not control for other characteristics that could have confound the relationship.

Zemach and Cohen (1986) compared the different perceptions of men and women on television, as symbolic reality, and the way they are perceived in social reality. The

subjects, a Jewish population over 20 years of age in Israel, were given two sets of similar questions; one pertaining to social reality and the other to symbolic reality. Their findings suggested more stereotyping related to traits, roles, and occupations of women in relation to television portrayals, however there were indications of stereotyping in both realms of reality. This separation may partially result from the belief that television distorts real life and supports the claims of phenomenologists such as Berger and Luckmann (1966) that people are "cognitively able to separate different realities." Heavier viewers they found perceived a smaller gap between the two realms of reality lending support for cultivation effects.

Allen & Hatchett's (1986) study of media influence on attitudes toward blacks brings together construction of social reality and cultivation analysis. They present a model related to the three realities; objective, symbolic, and subjective. The objective social reality includes social structural variables - income, age, education, and parental training and was used as a pattern for objective social reality for this study. The symbolic social reality variables include black oriented television and black print media. The subjective social reality, unlike most other studies, was part of the social reality effects, that is, the dependent variable. The social reality effects include self esteem as the close social reality effect while the remote social reality effects include black group perception, black group identification and black separatist perspective. The study focuses on the extent to which blacks' self esteem and the remote social reality effects are influenced by the symbolic and objective social reality. Allen and Hatchett found that symbolic reality measures did account for some increases in explained variance beyond objective social reality variables; however, the explained variance was still very small.

O'Keefe and Reid-Nash (1987) studied television as well as newspaper presentations of crime and investigated how these portrayals shaped perceptions, attitudes,

and behaviors regarding crime and crime prevention. Their findings offer evidence that "individuals who pay greater attention to television news about crime are more fearful of crime and are more concerned about protecting themselves from being victimized," (rather than those who are already concerned becoming more attentive). Their data also revealed that persons already more concerned and more knowledgeable became more attentive to newspaper crime news. These findings point to the issue of audience selectivity in that the television news allows the consistent viewer less selectivity and potentially more influence over social reality than print media.

The studies reviewed, in this section, relate to social construction of reality and show the conditional nature of television's influence. Under some conditions it seems to contribute to social construction of reality, but under others it does not. (Hawkins & Pingree 1982). These conditions are most important considerations as a direct-effects model of television's influence on social construction of reality is not adequate. Television's influence is a complex and indirect process of interaction with a "great variety of environmental forces and institutions." (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982;224). The answer to the link between television viewing and construction of social reality, may lie partly in the kinds of reality to be studied. (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982;237).

C. SUMMARY

Television and stereotyping of old people have not been widely studied and evidence that television has a direct influence on stereotyping is limited. Because there is criticism and controversy, this thesis proposes to add to the existing body of knowledge by examining new items as indicators of stereotyping. In addition, other conditions that could affect the relationship between television viewing and images of old people and aging will be considered. The effects of 'perception of media treatment of elderly people', 'contact

with elderly people', psychological well-being, and life satisfaction " will be examined as conditioning factors on the relationship between TV viewing and stereotyping of the aged. The content analytic studies reviewed in Chapter I found that TV portrayal of old people was not always negative. However as Gerbner et al (1979) did the most extensive research in this area, this study will use their findings as the basis for formulating hypotheses. This study will proceed from the assumption that television portrays elderly people in a negative way and that these negative portrayals produce or at least reinforce negative stereotyping of aging and old people.

Construction of social reality and cultivation analysis will be combined to address such questions as: How does the TV generation's perception of elderly people differ from others? What are the serious problems the public attributes to old age and how do these perceptions agree with the actual experience of older people? The next chapter will present the theoretical framework for this study; Berger and Luckmann's, "social construction of reality", Adoni and Mane's extended "social construction of reality", media dependency theory and cultivation analysis.

II. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Extensive research of the media's and in particular television's influence on individual's conceptions of the world (their social reality) suggest that some important factors must be considered in understanding how television affects social reality and how individuals process information in constructing their social realities (Hawkins & Pingree, 1981;347). The studies reviewed in Chapter I showed some of the complexities involved in the study of television's influence. This chapter will examine social construction of reality theory in depth as a theoretical framework for this study. The construction of social reality in relation to the media is treated sociologically with the psychological process of learning responsible for sociological effects (Hawkins & Pingree (1981;350). Figure 2.1 illustrates the process which will subsequently be described.

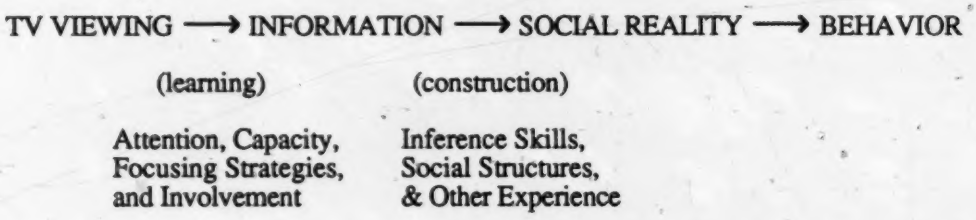
TV VIEWING ⟶ INFORMATION ⟶ SOCIAL REALITY ⟶ BEHAVIOR
(learning)
(construction)
Attention, Capacity, Focusing Strategies, and Involvement
Inference Skills, Social Structures, & Other Experience

Figure 2.1 Model of Conditions in Cultivation of Social Reality. (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982;244).

Television viewing is the beginning of the process of television's influence on social reality as is shown in Figure 2.1 followed by learning, which is probably incidental, and relates to a variety of TV messages. For instance, new response patterns can be learned by seeing certain behavior patterns acted out. i.e. modeled by actors. Such

behavior forms, repeatedly seen on TV, can be an influence in establishing or confirming related norms, particularly when real life situations are lacking as "reality checks" to correct inappropriate interpretations (Lowery & DeFleur, 1983;375). "Reality checks" are direct experiences based on other mass media, friends, family and other factors that can provide confirmation of television's message or act as filters for the television-world view. Content analyses of media portrayed behavior patterns can help in understanding the processes involved in modeling. The process of learning is very important, however, it will not be a focus of this study as a separate study would be necessary to explore this interesting issue in depth.

In determining the effectiveness of this learning, such factors as attention to television, memory capacity, focusing strategies and involvement must be considered as intervening variables on the relationship between TV viewing and learning. The viewers attention and the critical weighing of television messages, i.e. "active" vs "inactive" viewing is an important consideration. Although the findings are sometimes conflicting, there are some studies that suggest that "active" viewers are generally less affected by television's message than "inactive" viewers. Advertising researchers, for example, focus on the inactive viewers who they believe will be more likely to remember simple names in their short term memory. The belief is that more active viewing will lead to more rational weighing of evidence in constructing social reality, however, a great deal of controversy remains in this area. Another important consideration relates to focusing and involvement. Television, unlike other media, is usually viewed non-selectively according to the time of day. When choices are made, there seem to be adequate grounds to "hypothesize that over a long period of time, selective viewing of specific forms of content, ... could influence overt behavioral decisions." (Lowery & DeFleur, 1983;378). As yet there has been no substantial evidence to support this hypothesis. Nevertheless, effects identified with

specific content and selective viewing as opposed to habitual viewing are important consideration in any study of media effects (Hawkins & Pingree, 1981;348).

The actual social construction of reality is a separate step conditioned by a number of factors (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982;244). For example, social structural influences such as age, gender, education and income need to be considered as such factors will influence the social groups that surround the individual. In addition, experience with family and friends, and the "competing or complementing information of other experience(s)" affect the individual's concept of reality which in turn affects behavior (Hawkins & Pingree,1982;244). The processes involved in the social construction of reality present significant issues in communication research as they address the issue of 'what happens to most people most of the time rather than what happens to a particular individual'. Future research must take into account these separate steps and treat each of them as an empirical question (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982;244). This thesis will focus on the sociological (construction) rather cognitive (learning) effects of television.

Two basic approaches exist within the social[1] construction of reality framework. The first relates to social construction of reality as a relationship between culture and society , while the second approach focuses on social construction of reality as a type of media effect. Neither of these approaches alone provides a full picture of the role of mass communication and the process of the social construction of reality, as by definition this process includes interactions among individuals, society, and culture.

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[1]The process of construction of reality is defined as social because it is carried out only through real or symbolic social interaction (Adoni & Mane, 1984;325).

Berger & Luckmann's (1966) phenomenological approach to the study of the social construction of reality focuses on the process whereby individuals continuously create a shared reality that is objective and at the same time is subjectively meaningful. The objective reality refers to the social order or the institutional world taken from Durkheim' s social facts; those social factors that are external to the individual yet constrain his/her free will (Berger & Luckmann, 1966;15). Subjective, on the other hand , refers to the reality that is personally meaningful to the individual and is taken from Weber's verstehende (Ibid, 1966;15). Berger & Luckmann's key concepts which they describe as "moments" of a dialectical process are externalization[1], objectivation[2], and internalization[3]. The social construction of reality, then, is a dialectical process in which individuals act both as creators and products of their social world. These processes affect what we believe about the 'world' around us which includes our beliefs about old people.

Adoni & Mane (1984,324) expanded the conceptualization of the construction of social reality. Based on earlier work by Milliband (1969) and Hall (1977), they suggest that basically three types of reality are implied in this process when related to the study of mass media: (a) objective social reality which is experienced as the objective world existing outside the individual and confronting him or her as facts; (b) symbolic social reality, which includes any form of "symbolic expression of objective reality such as art,

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[1]Externalization refers to the first "moment" in the dialectical process where individuals create their social worlds (Berger & Luckmann, 1966;20). On the one hand it means that individuals can create a new social reality, while on the other hand, they can re-create social institutions by their ongoing externalization of them. It is in the externalization phase of reality construction that Berger & Luckmann see individuals as creative and capable of acting on their own environment i.e. creating society.

[2]Objectivation is the process whereby individuals "apprehend the reality of everyday life as an ordered reality" that imposes itself upon but appears independent of human beings. "The reality of everyday life appears already objectified, that is, constituted by an order of objects that have been designated as objects before my appearance on the scene." (Berger & Luckmann, 1966;21). Objectivation, in short, means that society is an objective reality.

[3]Internalization is the process by which an individual learns and accepts the social values and norms that apply to his/her social group or society. Whenever individuals take part in internalization, they are conforming to the expectations of existing social institutions and they are also recreating that social institution.

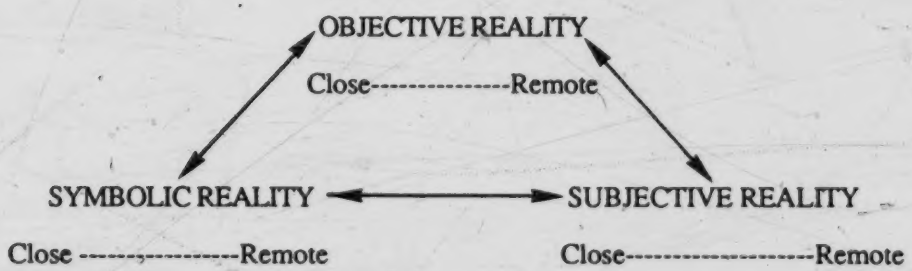
literature or media contents"; and (c) subjective social reality, where both the objective and the symbolic realities serve as an input for the construction of the individual's social actions, or his /her own personal reality. Symbolic reality is based on the selection and editing of material derived from reality, and therefore shows only a certain part of reality portrayed from a specific point of view (Adoni et al.,1984;35). Both objective and symbolic realities act as an input for the construction of the individual's own subjective reality.

Adoni and Mane (1984;327) suggest that the degree of media contribution to an individual's construction of subjective reality is a "function of one's direct experience with various phenomena and consequent dependence on the media for information about these phenomena" (Adoni & Mane,1984;327). This process is the media -dependency theory. As the mass media are not directly referred to in social construction of reality as presented by Berger and Luckmann, Adoni and Mane suggest that media-dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976) provides a conceptual link between social construction of reality theory and media research. Media-dependency theory provides a useful theoretical framework for empirical research in examining whether people depend on the media for information about social phenomena remote from everyday life experience more than they do for social phenomena which they experience daily.

The dialectical process of the expanded social construction of reality can be defined as a system consisting of two dimensions: 1. type of reality (objective, subjective symbolic) and 2. distance of social elements from direct experience (close - remote) (Adoni & Mane, 1984). Each of these realities is organized in relation to its zones of relevance distinguished on the basis of their distance from the 'present' as it exists in relation to the individual's immediate "sphere of activity". Close zones include those actors and situations with whom the individual interacts frequently in face-to-face situations. In relation to

elderly persons, the theory suggests that individuals who have close contact with elderly persons will be less influenced by the television-world view. The remote zones of relevance include more abstract elements that are not related to direct experience such as "public opinion" or the "social order" (Adoni & Mane, 1984;326). Because they are not related to direct experience, remote aspects will have a stronger influence on individual's perception of reality. The remote aspects for this thesis will include the perceptions of the portrayal of the aged on television. These close and remote aspects will be discussed in more detail in relation to hypotheses presented in Chapter III.

The model, shown in Figure 2.2, can be used to classify the social construction of reality into two general categories. The first category includes studies that focus on the interaction between symbolic reality and one of the other two realities, while the second category includes studies that examine the interactions between the three types of reality and the social elements from close to remote that are associated with them. To be complete all three realities should be considered and will be in this thesis (Adoni & Mane, 1984;337).



(Adoni & Mane,1984;327)

Figure 2.2. Extended Model of Construction of Social Reality (Adoni & Mane, 1984;327)

Studies examining the interaction between objective and symbolic reality ask the question, "Who is responsible for, and what determines the modes of reality portrayal in media contents?" (Adoni & Mane, 1984;329). This area of research includes studies of interactions within and between media organizations and any other interactions between symbolic contents and institutionalized social order i.e. objective reality (Hall,1977; Murdock & Golding,1977). Neo-Marxist media researchers, for instance, suggest that mass media contents reinforce the dominant ideology, thereby legitimizing the social order and maintaining the social status quo. The Glasgow University Media Group, which is Neo-Marxist and empirically oriented, has concentrated on the investigation of symbolic reality on the "institutional constraints that determine the choice of material presented by the mass media, and the characteristic modes of presentation" (Adoni & Mane,1984;333). Glasgow University Media Group(1976) found that through use of subtle verbal and visual techniques, so called factual televised news presented a distorted view of objective reality.

The political economy approach, on the other hand, examines the institutional level (the principles, rules, laws, conventions and instruments of control and regulation in a given society) and looks at these structural levels of society as determinants (McQuail,1983;55). McQuail (1985;106) believes that if media do shape a view of the world, this view is likely to reflect the concerns of those who have the most power to gain access to media, such as governments and corporate pressure groups as well as other wealthy and organized interests. The prime concern of these groups to make money. For example, the middle years bulge of characters shown on TV does not exist in the real life population curve but is similar to the profile of consumer income by age (Gerbner et al , 1979;5). Gerbner (Newsweek, 1982;140) suggests that commercial television will only "democratize its treatment of daily life", when it broadens its financial base. Until it does, he believes that television will be controlled by a group of business men selling a mass market product to customers who are unaware of the side effects of that product. "The

links between the economic determinants of the media on the one hand and the content of the media on the other" must be studied more thoroughly (Curran et al, 1982;18).

Most of the studies at the subjective/symbolic level focus on the study of media content with the assumption that the distorted pictures of reality presented shape audience opinions. Cultivation hypothesis, used to facilitate empirical research, suggests that "heavy viewers use the television world to define and interpret everyday reality so that television comes to shape or 'cultivate' their view of the world." (Gerbner et al. 1979;18). Gerbner et al (1980) maintained that exposure to this distorted world, which reflects power relationships, makes heavy viewers more "sexist, anomic, fearful of crime, and negative in their stereotypes of the elderly." They suggested that: "Innumerable facts (and values) outside of personal experience can only be learned... and related values derived... from the mass media, or from, others who have learned them from the mass media." (Gerbner et al, 1979;181). Underlying this hypothesis is the idea that television affects general beliefs about how the world is, but not how these beliefs will affect individuals. In contrast to Gerbner et al's belief, Cook et al (1983;174) argued "...that beliefs about how the world affects oneself depend more on actual life experiences and social networks than on television, whereas perceptions of how the world is in general depend more on vicarious experiences...".

Even though cultivation analysis lacks an underlying theoretical base, atheoretical accounting of effects has been helpful in understanding television as part of our symbolic social reality. Although the methods used to study cultivation hypotheses have been criticized, the underlying propositions are worthy of further examination. The important and relevant question according to Adoni and Mane, (1984;330): "To what extent do mass media contents contribute to the individual's perceptions of social reality ?" for this study will be replaced with: Under which conditions does heavy viewing of television affect

individuals? Cultivation analysis will examine television as one factor in construction of social reality.

SUMMARY

From the expanded social construction of reality perspective of Adoni and Mane (1984), television as symbolic social reality, together with objective and subjective social reality factors will form the theoretical framework of this study. The direct effects of symbolic reality vary depending on a number of factors which have already been discussed in both this chapter and Chapter I. Table 2.1 presents the variables for this study as they relate to the theoretical perspective. Chapter III will present linkages from these theoretically defined variables to empirical indicators. A conceptual model as well as hypotheses related to the review of literature and the proposed theoretical perspective will be developed and discussed in Chapter III.

OBJECTIVE SOCIAL REALITY	SYMBOLIC SOCIAL REALITY	SUBJECTIVE SOCIAL REALITY
Social structural variables	Mass media exposure	Mediating variables and Dependent variable
1. Age 2. Education 3. Income 4. Gender 5. Race	1. Hours watched TV, yesterday 2. Time spent watching TV	1. Psychological well-being 2. Life satisfaction 3. Contact with old people (close) 4. Perception of media treatment of old people (remote) Social reality effects 5. Perception of old people in relation to problems attributed to them

Table 2.1 Variables as they Relate to the Theoretical Perspective

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND HYPOTHESES

A. INTRODUCTION

In Chapter I, studies relating to stereotyping of elderly people, as well as studies relating to television and social reality, were described. Chapter II described a theoretical perspective relating media to social construction of reality. This chapter will present a conceptual model for this study and theoretical definitions for each of the variables. Suggested variable relationships are presented here and hypotheses to be tested are outlined in the concluding section of this chapter. Social construction of reality theory will be combined with media-dependency theory to explain the association between television viewing and stereotyping of elderly people.

B. RESEARCH MODEL

Social construction of reality, for this study, is made up of three broad categories objective, subjective and symbolic as presented in Chapter II, Table 2.1. Fig. 3.1 presents a conceptual model of the three realities as they relate to stereotyping of the aged. The variables are shown in terms of each of the realities while the arrows show the causal links of the model. This study will address only the relationships indicated by the solid arrows, that is, primarily television in relation to stereotyping and factors which could affect this relationship. This study will examine effects of TV viewing as the *symbolic social reality variable,* and its effects when combined with the model variables.

Research to date has not examined all relevant survey items, from the Harris (1975) survey, that might affect the relationship between TV viewing and stereotyping of elderly people. Previously untested dependent variables associated with stereotyping will be investigated along with new mediating variables not used in earlier research.

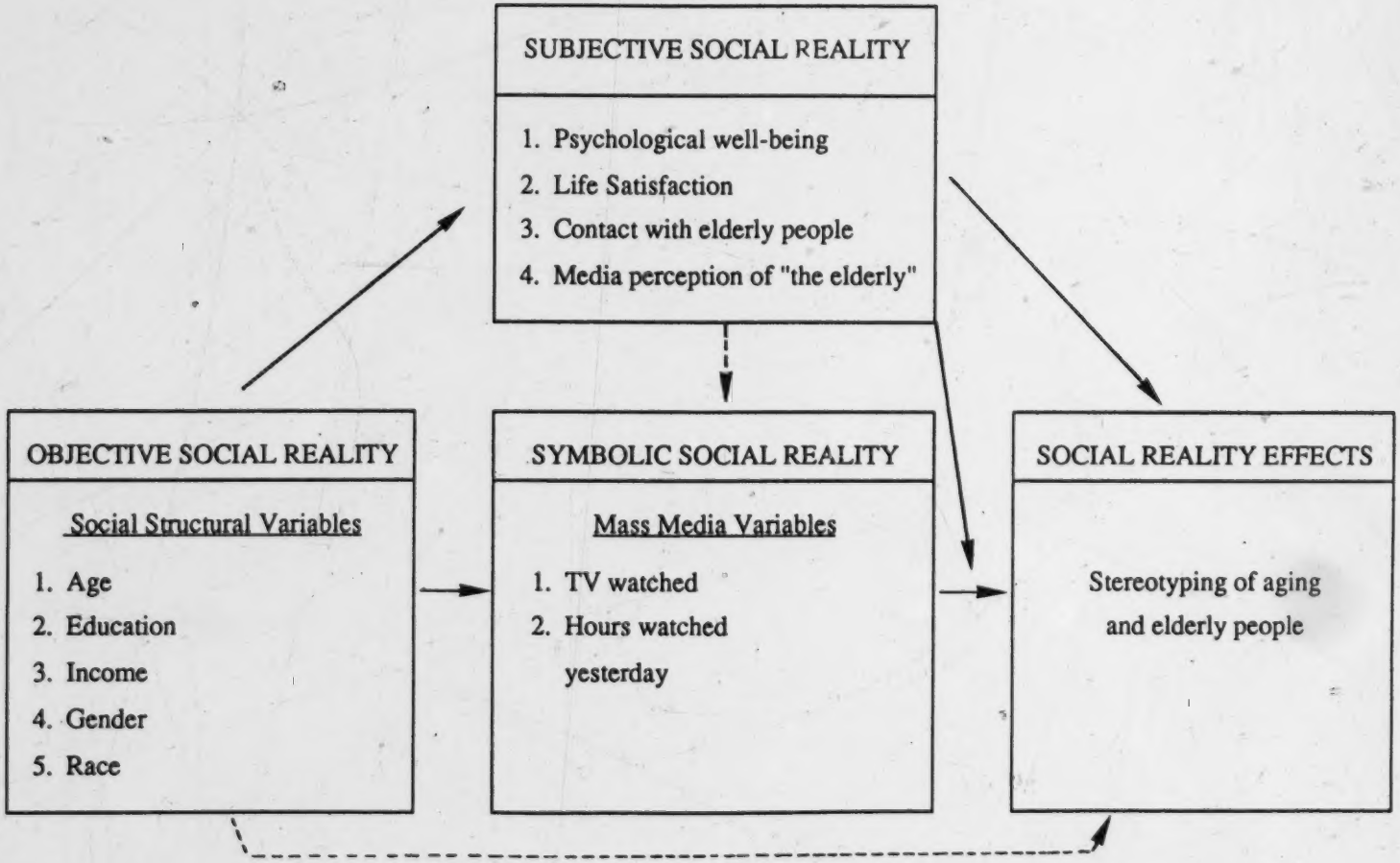


Figure 3.1 Conceptual Model of Construction of Social Reality and Stereotyping Aging and Elderly People

Structural variables will include age, education, income, gender and race and will represent *objective social reality variables*. The *subjective social reality variables* will be 'contact with elderly persons', 'perception of media treatment of the elderly people', psychological well-being and life satisfaction. Some of these variables will be examined for direct effects on stereotyping, but primarily these variables will be considered as mediating[1] factors on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping of aging and elderly people. The *social reality effects* will be stereotyping of older people in relation to problems attributed to them, but not necessarily experienced by them.

C. COMPOSITION OF THE MODEL

As the study will focus on stereotyping of elderly people and television these important variables will be discussed first. The subjective social reality variables will be examined next as mediating factors on this relationship. The objective social reality factors will be explored to see whether the relationship persists when we control for certain demographic variables[2].

1. Social Reality Effects (Stereotyping)

Stereotypes are simplified conceptions and images about certain groups of people which are sometimes inaccurate, but which have become standardized and are commonly held. (Davis, 1985;54: Atchley, 1988;260). They can be thought of as categorizations that help to organize our perceptions of reality regardless of the actual truth. Although not all stereotyping is negative, within traditional gerontological literature, stereotyping has

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[1]Mediating or interaction effects, occur when the association between two variables changes as the level of a third variable changes.

[2]The control is necessary, because these variables could affect both TV watching and stereotyping.

assigned negative attributes to aging and old people (Brubaker, 1976;441). Stereotypes, in relation to aging, are generally viewed as myths that fail to capture the reality of aging.

Even though elderly persons are traditionally categorized as those over 65 years of age, it is important to recognize that they are not a homogeneous group. Rather, they are a diverse segment of the population with different problems, self images, and experiences which are dependent on many factors not necessarily related to age. In spite of all the statistics we have about aging and elderly people that could promote a positive image of old age, our society perpetuates a negative mythology about being old. It is possible that some of this mythology exists as a consequence of "truth" in the past. For example, parents and grandparents may pass on information resulting in a particular attitude about aging (Davis, 1985;56). Some researchers believe that attitudes can be affected by portrayals on television as suggested in the review of literature. As most people of all ages have aging-related attitudes, researchers have tried to develop appropriate techniques to assess these attitudes. It is important to understand such attitudes as they have an affect on the quality of life of elderly people in our society (Palmore, 1982;333). Brubaker & Powers (1976;442) felt that attitudes, in addition to affecting the manner in which younger persons perceive and interact with elderly people, also affected the self definitions and behavior of elderly people .

As has been discussed in Chapter I, knowledge about and attitudes toward elderly people have been used as measures of stereotyping (Gerbner et al, 1980). Fig. 3.2 is a conceptual model showing the relationship of knowledge and attitudes to stereotyping behavior. The model shows that certain determinants affect our knowledge about elderly people. Knowledge, for this model, is defined as "beliefs or misconceptions about the facts of aging" and can relate to traits of "the elderly" or social conditions of "the elderly" (Palmore, 1982;341). Knowledge about aging can be improved, whereas attitudes relate to

old people and are more resistant to change. Knowledge is hypothesized to affect attitudes and behavior whereas attitudes affect only behavior (Palmore, 1982;341). Palmore (1982;342) suggested that attitudes are the "the evaluations (good/bad, pretty/ugly), the preferences (for interacting with older or younger persons) and the prescriptions (older people should not be discriminated against) about the aged." Even though studying attitudes is important, it is difficult to assess the relationship between age-related attitudes and actual observed behavior. It cannot be assumed that attitudes are appropriate measures of stereotyping..

DETERMINANTS ⟶	KNOWLEDGE ⟶	ATTITUDES ⟶	BEHAVIORS
Age	Traits	Evaluations	Discriminations
Sex	Conditions	Preferences	Interactions
Race		Prescriptions	Program
Support			
SES			
Marital Status			
Experience with aged			
Training on aging			

Figure 3.2 Conceptual Model of Stereotyping of Aging and Old Age.
(Palmore, 1982;341)

In a study of social construction of reality in relation to older people and television, Gerbner et al (1980) chose variables relating to knowledge and attitude, taken from the Harris survey, as indicators of stereotyping. The Harris survey (1975) found that older people were typically seen as better educated, healthier, more financially secure, a larger part of the population, and as living longer than compared to 10 or 20 years ago. These items were treated as accurate beliefs as they could be empirically proven. Gerbner et al (1980) used these items to make a "knowledge index" to measure stereotyping. However, the correlations of the items are low so that the reliability and hence validity of the measure

is questionable. On the other hand, Gerbner's "attitude index", when tested in this study using a control index of "attitudes toward self", showed a high correlation between these two indexes, indicating internal consistency. However, respondents with poor attitudes about themselves also had poor attitudes toward older people suggesting problems in discriminant validity[1]. Gerbner et al's knowledge and attitude index will be discussed more fully in Chapter IV, section D, which describes the operationalization of the stereotyping variables for this thesis.

Atchley (1988) suggested another approach to studying stereotyping of older people. He agreed with earlier researchers that "whether or not beliefs or stereotypes are widely held has nothing to do with whether or not they are actually true" (Atchley, 1988;260). He agreed with Lutsky (1980;294) that even though some belief assessments of older people were similar to self reports, there were indications that people under 65 tended to over emphasize problems experienced by older people. Such perceptions about problems, he felt, perpetuated stereotyping of "later life" as a negative life stage. Exaggerations of the problems of old age encourage the young to turn away from elderly people as they are reminders of what life will be like for them some day. He suggested that assessing the discrepancy of problems attributed to elderly people by those under 65 vs actual experiences of elderly people, could provide an appropriate measures of stereotyping of the elderly[2]. The focus, using this criteria, is on the state of old age rather than on the aged as an existing category of people.

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[1]Discriminant validity measures whether an "instrument can discriminate between the phenomenon it is intended to measure and different but related phenomena." (Campbell & Fiske, 1959).

[2]Effects of such attitudes often remain as people grow older with research showing that the elderly often have a more positive image of themselves than they do of other old people (Lutsky, 1980;298; Bader, 1980;9).

Table 3.1 shows some of these problems and the discrepancies between beliefs about and actual experiences of older people taken from the Harris survey (Atchley, 1988;261; Harris, 1975;31). Problems of elderly people related to these discrepancies, that is, the myth and the reality of aging, will be the social reality effects (stereotyping) for this study. Related items from the Harris survey (1975) will be chosen and discussed in Chapter IV.

Table 3.1

Beliefs about Older People's Problems versus their Actual Experiences.

PROBLEM	PERCENT OF OLDER PEOPLE ACTUALLY EXPERIENCING THE PROBLEM	PERCENT OF GENERAL PUBLIC THAT ATTRIBUTED THE PROBLEM TO "MOST PEOPLE OVER 65"
Fear of crime	23	50
Poor health	21	51
Inadequate income	15	62
Loneliness	12	60
Not feeling needed	7	54
Keeping busy	6	37
Sparse job opportunities	5	45
Poor housing	4	35

(Atchley, 1988;261: Adapted from Harris et al., 1975;31)

2. Symbolic Social Reality Variables

The "reality" of the television world is based primarily on the audience it attracts, rather than governed by the "reality" of the real world. Consequently, television, which may contain many biases and distortions, is not an accurate reflection of the real world.

While a viewer may be aware of these biases, the extent to which they affect reality are unknown as the effects of television are subtle, complex and affected by many factors. The direct influences of television are very controversial. For instance, if a phenomenon is overrepresented on television it is more likely to affect social reality. Empirical studies in relation to violence have shown stronger cultivation effects in relation to violence, which is by all measures overrepresented, than findings related to elderly people who by all accounts are underrepresented (Davis & Davis, 1985).

As discussed in Chapter II, some of the processes involved in understanding how television influences reality include assessing active vs inactive viewing and the effects associated with selective vs habitual viewing. There is some evidence that "active processing and involvement may inhibit cultivation" (Hawkins & Pingree, 1981;354). The theoretical perspective of this thesis suggests that these symbolic social reality factors must be considered in addition to measures of consumption in determining how television influences social reality. Using such multiple measures would produce more valid results, but unfortunately data related to the other dimensions were not available.

Symbolic social reality, for this study, will be exposure to television in terms of time spent watching TV. Cultivation analysis, which argues that heavy viewers use television to interpret their own reality, will be be examined in relation to the new stereotyping variables. Consumptions patterns are important as almost every home has one or more television sets. In many households the television is on for most of the day as a background to family activities whether or not anyone is watching. Most of the research shows that TV viewing increases with age, with the exception of older blacks who watch less than younger blacks (Kubey, 1980;17). The Myth and Reality data (Harris et al,1975) used for this study found that the amount of viewing increased with age up to about 70 years before showing a small decline. Harris (1975) found that 32% of his sample, of

viewers, were heavy viewers, 20% were light viewers and 41.4% were moderate viewers. Only 6.6% never watched TV indicating that 93.6% of the public in this survey watched some television.

2. Subjective Social Reality Variables

The subjective social reality variables will operationalize the close - remote aspect of social construction of reality discussed in Chapter II. The close subjective social reality factor will be 'contact with elderly people' i.e. those "actors with whom the individual interacts... frequently in face-to-face situations". The remote factor will be 'perception of media treatment of elderly people' i.e. "more abstract social elements that are not accessible to direct experience, for example public opinion..." (Adoni & Mane,1984;326). As described in Chapter II, close zones remove the sphere of influence from television. The subjective social reality variables will also include psychological well-being (self-esteem) and life satisfaction. These subjective variables each, as described in Chapter II, each has personal meaning to an individual and affect that individual's social reality. While direct effects of these variables on stereotyping will be examined, the primary interest for this study will be how these variables affect the relationship between TV viewing and stereotyping. The following sections will relate to studies of the subjective social reality variables for this thesis.

a. Contact with Elderly People

Research indicates that direct contact and experience with elderly people is likely to result in a more positive perception of aging (Bader, 1980; Brubaker & Powers, 1976: Bekker & Taylor, 1967). When individuals come into contact with older persons the "distance between observer and observed decreases." (Brubaker & Power, 1976;445). People tend to have more negative aging related attitudes and assumptions about unknown elderly people than toward familiar elderly people, therefore young people with living

grandparents are less likely to stereotype aging and old age. Some studies have shown that when children were asked about their grandparents, there was a more positive image of old age than when they were asked about most old people (Bader, 1980;9). Bekker and Taylor (1966) found that contact and experience with great-grandparents often resulted in rejections of negative stereotypes of old age. More positive attitudes exist toward old age when respondents personalize the older person in terms of the family unit (Weinberger & Millhan, 1975). Even though most studies found that contact with elderly people was associated with more positive images, a few studies found that 'contact' was neither a reliable nor a proven indicator of attitudes toward elderly people (Kidwell & Booth, 1977; Ivester & King, 1977).

In relation to television, Hawkins & Pingree (1981;351) suggested that contact with older people acted as a filter for the television world view and had a positive mediating effect on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping of elderly people. Gerbner et al (1979;24) believed that negative images of the aged on television would have more of an effect on individuals who had little personal contact with old people. The effect of contact with elderly people will be examined in this study and described more fully in later chapters.

b. Media Perception of Elderly People

The remote factor examines media perception of elderly people and could be operationalized as a symbolic reality variable as well. In relation to the theory, it is more appropriately classified as a remote subjective reality factor. Gerbner et al (1979;26) concluded that as those who found television's treatment of "the elderly" to be relatively neutral or "benign watch more television, they have more negative images of old people in the real world." This pattern, they found, held up within different education and age groups. However, they concluded that because "media perception" explained little of the

variance that TV watching made the important difference in stereotyping of "the elderly". Hypotheses related to these concepts will be discussed later in this chapter.

Korzenny and Neuendorf (1980;78) found that older individuals are more likely to perceive "the elderly" on television portrayed as assets and as respected. Their study used an elderly sample and examined self concept and media portrayal. They found that perceiving old people on TV to be portrayed as assets was related to a positive self concept, whereas perceiving old people on TV as hindrances was related to a negative self concept. This pattern suggests that positive portrayal of the aged on television can be "helpful in promoting a positive self-image and a more productive integration into society." (Korzenny & Neuendorf, 1980;80). This approach is beyond the scope of this study, however, future research could examine this interesting issue.

c. Psychological Well-being and Life Satisfaction

These variables are categorized together in this section because they relate to one another conceptually. The psychological well-being measure asks if the individual has a favorable view of him/her self and represents the *affective* assessment of subjective quality of life. It is easily changeable and as a result most related measures are short term. The life satisfaction measure, on the other hand, refers to an assessment of the overall conditions of life comparing ones aspirations to ones actual achievements i.e. a "*cognitive* assessment of progress toward desired goals - an evaluation of the congruence between ideal and real life circumstances." (George, 1981;351).

The psychological well-being variable in the Myth and Reality data is measured by the Bradburn Affect Balance Scale. This scale measures recent experiences of positive and negative affects. The score represents happiness as the extent to which positive feelings outweigh negative feelings (George, 1981;356). Although it generates quantitative data and

reports high reliability when administered over intervals of one week or less, there are reliability problems when administered over a longer period of time (George, 1981;369). Life satisfaction is measured by the Life Satisfaction Index and presents some question as to its suitability for the heterogeneous sample used in the Myth & Reality survey. For example, there are several items which require a comparison of current conditions to conditions in the past, and there is question as to whether such age related items are meaningful for younger adults (George, 1981;367).

The conceptual model indicates that life satisfaction and psychological well-being are affected by the objective social reality variables. For example, age with the related changes in status affects the degree of life satisfaction and psychological well-being. In general younger individuals score lower in life satisfaction and higher in happiness that older individuals. A possible explanation could be that young adults are faced with substantial discrepancies between their aspirations and achievements, resulting in lower life satisfaction. On the other hand, younger adults faced with the expectations of their potential may report higher levels of happiness compared to older individuals (Campbell et al, 1976). Middle age appears to be the low point in both happiness and life satisfaction (Campbell et al, 1976).

Harris et al (1975) found that older people are only slightly less satisfied with their life than those under 65, with those individuals over 80, the least satisfied of the elderly group. They found that median life satisfaction scores varied more dramatically by income and education than by age (Harris et al, 1975;161). In addition, they found that general satisfaction affected views of the world as a whole and in particular views of specific groups of people. As people become more satisfied with their lives they have more positive attitudes toward others including "the elderly" (Harris et al, 1975;164). These effects are mentioned as the Harris data will be used for this study, and this description

provides a profile of the respondents in the study in relation to life satisfaction. The findings in relation to psychological well-being indicated that most of the individuals in this study showed high levels of psychological well being.

Although these effects are mentioned, the primary concern of this study, in relation to the subjective social reality variables, will be to examine how these variables affect stereotyping and the relationship between television viewing and stereotyping of elderly people. There were no studies with significant findings examining these variables as conditioning factors on TV watching and stereotyping. Related hypotheses will be presented later in this chapter, while operationalization of these variables will be discussed in Chapter IV.

3. Objective Social Reality Variables

The objective social reality includes the demographic variables of age, education, income, gender and race. These variables relate to those factors that place an individual in a position "to have certain experiences and to influence the range of experiences the individual is likely to have" (Allen & Hatchett, 1986;100). They will be control variables used to examine and compare TV effects for different demographic groups. Limited direct television effects rely on such demographic explanations to interpret behavior.

a. Age

Age is an important variable for this study because it is associated with particular life styles and stages in life. Brubaker & Powers, (1976:445) found that consistent with contact hypothesis, older individuals have a more positive image of old age than younger persons. The focus of this study will be on the image of elderly people as seen by individuals 65 years and under, that is, the TV generation, middle-aged adults, and adults in later life. Chapter IV will describe these categories and the operationalization of age.

While the data for this study provides information for the study of elderly people's perceptions of themselves and other elderly persons, studying this approach would require a separate analysis. This is discussed further in Chapter VI, in future research.

Studies of age differences in relation to television viewing and stereotyping of elderly people presents some inconsistent findings. Gerbner et al (1980) found that television had a general and consistent influence on knowledge and attitudes about elderly people for all age groups. Passuth and Cook (1986;75), replicating the Gerbner et al study, found decreased knowledge about old people as TV watching increased, only in young respondents between 18 and 34 years of age. As this generation has grown up with television, they suggested that "an influence from television may exist only for those for whom television has been a lifelong companion." This study will examine the responses of those under 65, in relation to TV watching and stereotyping of elderly people. Of particular interest will be the responses of the TV generation.

b. Education and Income

Education and income are seen as important determinants of attitudes toward aging. A study by Bell and Stanfield (1973) indicated that images of old age were most positive among high occupation and high education groups, whereas television viewing studies have associated heavy viewers with low income and low education (Kubey, 1980;17: Palmore, 1982;338: Allen & Hatchett, 1986:107). Passuth and Cook's (1986;72) findings showed inconsistent evidence of variability between education groups. However, they did find that people with a completed college education had the highest levels of knowledge about older people unless they watched more than 4 hours of television per day. This analysis will be interested in which educational and income groups are most likely to attribute serious problems to older people, that is, which groups are most susceptible to television's message.

c. Gender

Gender has been widely accepted as an important determinant of attitudes, however, in relation to television and attitudes toward older people, the literature is limited. Neither Gerbner et al (1980) nor Passuth and Cook (1985) found significant findings for gender. This study will examine the differences in responses between men and women, in relation to TV watching and stereotyping of older people.

d. Race

Race is an important consideration as it presents a unique situation with blacks often featured in stereotypical portrayals which sometimes results in negative group identification (Allen & Hatchett, 1986;101). There is some literature that suggests that black's attitudes toward their elderly differs from that of whites. For instance, Harris et al (1975) found a greater willingness to support older people among the blacks than among the whites. In relation to stereotyping of elderly people and television, previous findings showed no significant effects for race (Gerbner et al, 1980; Passuth & Cook,1985;72). This study will examine the differences between blacks and whites in relation to television watching and stereotyping of elderly people.

D. RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between television viewing and stereotyping of elderly people from a social construction of reality theoretical perspective. The relationships between the variables have been presented as they relate to this perspective and as they are shown in the conceptual model, Figure 3.1. The following hypotheses will be tested in this empirical investigation.

1. Symbolic Social Reality - Television Viewing

Cultivation hypothesis focuses only on television and suggests that; a) the accumulation of television exposure has an influence on an individual's social reality and b) the direction of the influence is dependent on the biases in the television content (Allen & Hatchett, 1986: Gerbner et al, 1980). The hypotheses related to television viewing are based on content analyses that indicate older people are more often negatively presented on television and cultivation analysis which indicates that the more you watch TV, the more likely you are to have the television-world view as shown in Figure 3.3.

TELEVISION VIEWING $\xrightarrow{+}$ **ATTRIBUTE MORE SERIOUS PROBLEMS TO ELDERLY PEOPLE**

(STEREOTYPING)

Figure 3.3 Causal Diagram: Cultivation Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1 -- **Stereotyping of elderly people will increase as TV watching increases.**

2. Subjective Social Reality Variables

The subjective variables 'perception of media treatment of elderly people', 'contact with elderly people', psychological well-being, and life satisfaction will be examined as mediating factors on the relationship between television viewing and stereotyping of elderly people. The media perception variables will be presented next for continuity, as they are TV related variable.

Hypothesis 2a relates to cultivation hypothesis that is, the more you watch TV the more likely you are to have the television-world view. Therefore, those who see television's portrayal of elderly people as positive will have a more positive view. The hypotheses relating to how individuals see elderly people portrayed on television is;

Hypothesis 2-- **a. Those who see television's portrayal as positive will have a positive perception of elderly people.**

b. The perception of the portrayal of elderly people on television will have a conditioning[1] effect on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping of elderly people.

Most studies found that people tend to have more negative age-related attitudes and assumptions about unknown old people than toward familiar ones. As contact with old people increases the effect of TV watching decreases (Gerbner et al, 1980). Based on these findings, the hypotheses for this study, in relation to contact with elderly people are;

Hypothesis 3-- **a. The primary effects of contact with elderly people will be the reduction of stereotyping.**

b. 'Contacts with elderly people' will have a mediating effect on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping of elderly people.

The literature in this area indicates that heavy viewers of television have lower psychological well-being and lower life satisfaction levels. (Kubey, 1980;26). As well, as has been discussed, those with lower psychological well-being and life satisfaction will tend to attribute more serious problems to older people. As subjective social reality factors

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[1] Conditioning, in terms of interaction, that is the association between TV watching and stereotyping, in terms of problems attributed to the elderly, will change as the levels of perception of TV portrayal of the elderly change. An effect is expected, however the direction is not predicted. If the perception of the portrayal of the elderly is seen to be positive, the negative effect of TV watching on stereotyping of the elderly will decrease. However, if the perception of the portrayal is seen as negative, the effect of TV watching on stereotyping of the elderly will increase.

these variables, which are personally meaningful to individuals, will affect how they perceive the world around them.

Hypothesis 4-- **a. Stereotyping will be lower in individuals who have higher levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction.**

b. Psychological well-being and life satisfaction will have a mediating effect on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping.

3. Objective Social Reality Variables

The objective social reality variables for this thesis age, education, income, gender and race will be examined as control variables. This study will examine the demographic variables in relation to the new indicants of stereotyping used in this study.

Previous research suggests that the TV generation is most influenced by television because it has always been a part of their lives. In addition contact hypothesis implies that older people have more contact with other older people and as a result will be less likely to attribute serious problems to them. Based on these findings the following hypothesis is proposed in relation to age.

Hypothesis 5-- **Heavy viewers of the "TV generation" will attribute the most serious problems to elderly people.**

As there have been no significant findings for education, income, gender and race in relation to TV watching and stereotyping of elderly people, hypotheses related to these

variables will not be presented. They will, however, be examined as control variables and the findings will be reported in Chapter V .

E. SUMMARY

Chapter III presented a research model that included the variables to be used for this study. These variables were theoretically defined and the hypotheses to be tested were outlined. Chapter IV will include operational definitions of the variables in the research model, a description of the secondary data set, and preliminary stages of the the data analysis. As well, the statistical procedures to be followed will be defined.

IV. THE SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will describe the sampling procedure and the secondary data Myth and Reality of Aging as they relate to this thesis. This will be followed by an explanation of the procedures used to analyse the data and a discussion of the operational definitions of the variables shown in the conceptual model, Figure 3.1, in the previous chapter. Survey items conceptually related to stereotyping (from the Myth and Reality data) and not used in previous research will be operationalized. A new stereotyping index will be introduced, as the dependent variable, which will examine stereotyping in relation to problems attributed to the elderly.

B. DATA AND SAMPLE

The methodology, for this study, entails secondary analysis of data using the Myth and Reality of Aging (1974) data, published in 1975 by the National Council on Aging. Secondary data analysis is very useful in view of the costs involved in research in the social sciences. However, it is most important to assess the quality of the data as well as the choice of items. There are a number of national surveys related to aging, with the Harris surveys, Myth and Reality of Aging, 1975 and the more recent Aging in the Eighties, 1981 among the largest. Aging in the Eighties[1] was considered for this study, but important media questions were not available. In addition, the Myth and Reality data had been used for the only previous research involving social construction of reality, in relation to television and stereotyping of the aged, done by Gerbner et al (1980). The Gerbner research, however, omitted important and relevant survey items as potential stereotyping variables. They will be examined in this analysis.

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[1] Aging in the Eighties will be discussed further in Chapter VI, future research.

The survey for the Myth and Reality of Aging was conducted in June and July of 1974 by Louis Harris and Associates and is considered by some as the "most substantial source of information on public beliefs about old age and elderly persons" (Lutsky, 1980;293). The majority of items in this survey, which include data on various demographic characteristics, are social-psychological and emphasize two content areas. One content area includes behavioral reports of activities such as community participation, daily activities and family activities. The second content area is concerned with the attitudes toward aging and the aged of both young and old persons. This content area includes questions on perceptions of problems, perceptions of personality and attitudes, feelings toward growing old, and perceptions of the treatment of elderly persons by the media. The Harris data suggests that a number of both accurate and inaccurate beliefs exist about elderly people, and that the general public tends to overemphasize problematic aspects of aging (Atchley, 1988; Harris, 1975). For example, compared to elderly persons' self reports, beliefs of younger respondents about typical activities exaggerate the extent to which people over 65 watch television and do nothing. These discrepancies will be the basis for choosing stereotyping measures for this analysis. The criteria and choices of variables will be described later in this chapter.

The 'Myth and Reality' data used multi-stage random cluster sampling to draw a population sample. This method ensures that every household has an equal chance of being chosen. However, it can produce additional sampling error as the samples tend to be more homogeneous within clusters than in the population as a whole, in other words there is intraclass correlation. The larger the size of clusters at the last stage, the larger the impact on sampling errors (Fowler, 1984;39). Therefore, it is important to interpret levels of statistical significance cautiously. The Harris sample of 4,254 persons, 18 years and over, included an oversample of approximately 2,800 persons 65 years of age and over. As

older people are only a small part of the population, the oversample followed special screening techniques at the final stage of the sampling to find older persons to interview (Henretta et al, 1977;161). The sampling techniques were considered valid (Henretta et al, 1977).

The entire sample will be analyzed to find the differences between the responses of those under 65 about elderly people and the responses of elderly people about other elderly people, in order to establish the stereotyping index for this thesis. The remaining analyses will be limited to the subsample of 1,457 respondents between the ages of 18 and 64 years and their responses about older people. The primary focus will be on those who watch TV, although findings in relation to non-viewers, who make up only 6.6% of the sample, will be examined. Table 4.1 gives a description of the sample by age groups.

There are some methodological problems with the Myth and Reality data in terms of definitions of basic concepts. For example, in relation to the question "time spent watching television", the response "alot" may vary by a number of norms. As well, there are problems associated with measuring psychological well-being and life satisfaction, which have already been described.

Table 4.1

Description of Sample by Age (Harris, 1975;vi)

AGE	NUMBER	WEIGHTED %*
18-64	1457	85%
65 and over	2797	15%
18-24	191	18%
25-39	439	27%
40-54	341	26%
55-64	486	14%
65-69	1033	5%
70-79	1295	7%
80 and over	469	3%

* % weights are used to produce % totals equal to the number of persons in a particular category. (Harris; 1975;iv)

C. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The Midas computer program was used to test the hypotheses. The analysis consisted of correlations[1], factor analysis[2], one way analyses of variance, bivariate regressions, multiple regressions, and analysis of covariance.

Where possible multiple indicators were used to create indexes. This was done to increase the reliability of the measures and to offer the possibility for testing construct validity. Factor analysis was used as a statistical technique to test the uni- dimensionality of the different sets of items used for measuring some of the concepts. The sets were analyzed separately using principal component analysis. Factors with an eigen value of less than one were disregarded. Using this criterion, each analysis yielded a single factor, so that rotation was not necessary. The one exception was the items related to TV portrayal of elderly persons which yielded two factors, TV positive and TV negative portrayal.

Analysis of variance (anova) was used to test for non-linearity. One-way anova is an omnibus test designed to detect evidence of any difference among a set of group means (Agresti & Finlay, 1986:398). This statistic allows for a test of linearity through the calculated means for a dependent variables over the independent or control variables. This relationship is important as linearity is assumed by the simple regression models. An additional test for non-linearity used analysis of variance on the residuals of the regression

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[1]All correlations will be measured using the Pearson correlation.

[2]The interrelationships between variables were analyzed so that the variables could be reduced to smaller categories or indexes. Factor analysis is useful in describing the "separate dimensions underlying a set of data, and the factor loadings for each item provide a convenient and meaningful indication of the contribution of each item to a given factor" (Zeller & Carmines, 1980;60). Kerlinger (1979;181) describes a factor loading as a coefficient, "a positive or negative decimal number usually less than 1, that expresses how much a test or observed variable is loaded or saturated in a factor." Using too few factors can result in an over simplified view of a subject, while using too many factors results in an overly complicated view of that subject (Zeller & Carmines, 1980;20: Agresti & Finlay, 1986;514).

analysis. Where the relationship between the dependent and independent variables is linear, there will be no significant differences among the residuals of the dependent and the independent variables.

Bivariate regressions are useful in predicting the values of one variable from the values of another. A regression coefficient describes how "the mean of the values of a dependent variable changes according to the value of an independent variable" (Agresti & Finlay, 1986:249). Multiple regressions, on the other hand, are used to analyze the relationships between a dependent variable and a set of independent variables by indicating that amount of variation in the dependent variable that can be accounted for by all the independent variables acting together. This method provides a better predictor of a dependent variable than can be obtained by using only one independent variable. Multiple regressions also allow us to analyze partial relationships between two variables, while controlling for the other variables (Agresti & Finlay, 1986:316). Partial relationship can produce quite different results from bivariate relationships as we have seen in the research of Gerbner et al (1980) and Passuth & Cook (1985) described in Chapter I.

The multiple regression model provides a multiple R square or coefficient of determination which specifies the amount of variation in the dependent variables that can be accounted for by all the variables acting together (Agresti & Finlay 1986;326). A high R square would suggest that predictive power of a set of independent variables in relation to the dependent variables is very good. The R square for a study such as this is generally quite low as there is a dense causal web of factors contributing to the results.

Interaction effects occur when the nature of the relationship between the dependent variable and an independent variable changes for different levels of a particular control (Agresti & Finlay 1986;415). Analysis of covariance is an omnibus test used to detect

interaction of the control variable with all other independent variables currently in the model. It can be described as a "combination of analysis of variance (where the independent variable is categorical) and standard regression analysis (where the independent variable is interval)" (Agresti & Finlay, 1986:442). Moreover, it will detect non-monotonic interaction, i.e. situations in which the slopes differ for some but not all values of the control variable or when the pattern of differences is non-monotonic. The disadvantage is the low power of the test, because it costs so many degrees of freedom. The null hypothesis is rejected if equal slopes are significance in analysis of covariance and a further test for interaction is warranted. The further test for interaction involves addition of a cross product variable[1] to the model, (assuming the effect of the control variable on the slope of the dependent variable on the independent variable in linear). If the cross product variable is significant in the main model interaction effects can be assumed.

[1] A variable created from the product of the two variables assumed to be involved in the interaction.

D. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE VARIABLES

The following list presents the variables that will be operationalized for this thesis:

Independent variables

1. Hours watching TV, yesterday
2. How much time TV

Mediating variables

3. Perception of media treatment of elderly people
4. Contact with elderly people
    a. Persons over 65 in the household
    b. Parents over 65
    c. Last saw parents
    d. Grandparents over 65
    e. Last saw grandparents
    f. Family helps respondent
    g. Respondent helps family
5. Psychological well-being
6. Life satisfaction

Control variable

7. Age
8. Education
9. Income
10. Gender
11. Race

Dependent variable

12. Problems attributed to elderly people

These variables will be described in the next section as they relate to their theoretical categories. Because the stereotyping and television variables are so central to this analysis they will be discussed first, followed by the mediating variables and the control (demographic) variables.

E. DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIABLES

Stereotyping Variables (Dependent Variable)

The review of literature, Chapter I, showed that social gerontologists frequently relate a number of problems to aging and the aged. For example, Kuypers and Bengston (1973) suggested poor health and loss of productive roles as problems of old people, while Hess (1984) wrote of emotional, financial, and housing problems. In addition, Atchley (1988) referred to specific problems from the Harris survey (1975), indicating that beliefs about these problems in relation to elderly people perpetuated negative stereotypes of aging. He suggested that there was a discrepancy between problems attributed to elderly people and problems actually experienced by elderly people. This discrepancy, using specific problem variables from the Harris survey (1975), will form the basis of the stereotyping for this study. The discrepancy between 'perceived' and 'real' problems is operationalized in terms of responses to the following questions:

> Now I'm going to read you some problems that other people have mentioned to us. For each, would you tell me whether it is a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or hardly a problem at all for you personally?

1. Not having enough money to live a problem.
2. Poor health, a problem.
3. Loneliness a problem.
4. Poor housing a problem.
5. Not enough clothing a problem.

6. Keeping busy a problem.
7. Fear of crime a problem.
8. No friends a problem.
9. Not feeling needed a problem.
10. Not enough education a problem.
11. Not enough job opportunities a problem.
12. Not enough medical care a problem.

These same 12 problems were presented again, however this time the respondents age 65+ and those 18 - 64 years were asked whether these same problems were a very serious problem, a somewhat serious problem, or hardly a problem at all for most people over 65. The responses to both sets, that is problems attributed to 'self' and problems attributed to 'elderly people', will be examined for this study. Missing values, which included individuals who responsed "not sure", were removed from the sample.

Correlation analysis showed significant correlations (.2188 - .6243) between these variables. Factor analysis[1] of these variables indicated a relatively high level of association for problems relating to self with the unscaled factor loadings for the items ranging from .29153 to .47437. The factor loadings for problems attributed to the elderly were slightly higher and ranged from .31296 to .51289. In addition all of these problem variables show face validity in relation to problems attributed to elderly people.

If, as suggested by Atchley (1988), older people are less likely to see these problems as a feature of old age, then it can be argued that the discrepancy represents stereotypes. In order to examine this discrepancy the full sample of 4,254 was divided into 3 age categories: LT 65 (less than 65 years), LT 75 (less than 75 years), GE 75(greater than 75 years). Table 4.2 shows the means related to problems attributed to

[1]Factor analysis is used to clarify the pattern of association among a "set of indicants designed to measure a particular theoretical concept." (Zeller & Carmines, 1980:19).

Table 4.2

Mean Score[1] of Persons under 65 Attributing Problems to those 65+ and Mean Score of Persons 65+ Experiencing the Problem

PROBLEM[2]	MEAN[3] OF PERSONS UNDER 65 ATTRIBUTING THE PROBLEM TO THOSE 65+	MEAN OF OLDER PEOPLE EXPERIENCING THE PROBLEM	
Age	under 65	65 -74	75+
Not feeling needed	2.44	1.29	1.36
Loneliness	2.55	1.47	1.60
Not enough jobs	2.22	1.25	1.16
Poor housing	2.14	1.22	1.18
Money to live	2.56	1.69	1.60
Keeping busy	2.19	1.26	1.30
Not enough medical care	2.24	1.40	1.37
Not enough friends	2.03	1.22	1.24
Poor health	2.46	1.74	1.87
Fear of crime	2.37	1.76	1.71
Not enough education	1.83	1.44	1.39
Not enough clothing	1.71	1.58	1.11

[1]The range of score is from 1 - 3, with 3 representing the most serious problem.
[2]The problems are rank ordered starting with those showing the greatest discrepancy in mean values between those under 65 and those over 65.
[3]All of the means of are significant at $p < .01$ (anovas of age/problems).

older people by individuals under 65 years of age and the means of older people (65 - 74 years, and 75 years and older) actually experiencing the problem. The findings showed that older people found these problem to be less serious for themselves than respondents under 65 believed them to be. For example, persons under 65 believed "feeling needed" was a serious problem for elderly people, (mean value of 2.44[1]), whereas elderly people 65 - 74 years and over 75 years, hardly found this to be a problem at all (mean values 1.29 and 1.36) These means were rank ordered with the largest discrepancy, between problems attributed to older people and those actually experience by older people, ranking number 1 and indicating the greatest degree of stereotyping. This is one of the criteria used in selecting the 'problem' variables from the Harris (1975) data and is presented as criterion 1 in Table 4.4.

Brubaker and Powers (1976;445) believed that older individuals would have a more positive image of elderly persons than younger persons because they are closer in age and would be able to assess older people more realistically. This belief will form the basis for second criterion which will examine the correlations between a respondent's age and problems attributed to the elderly. These correlations are shown in Table 4.3. Even though some of the variables were not significant this criterion was applied as a check on the first criterion. The items were ranked according to correlations starting with the highest negative correlation. Negative correlations indicated that younger respondents are more likely to attribute more serious problems to elderly[2] people . These correlations are the basis for criterion 2 in Table 4.4.

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[1]On a three point scale: 1. Hardly, a problem at all. 2. Somewhat serious problem. 3. Very serious problem.

[2]"Not enough friends" showed a positive correlation (Table 4.3). That is, older respondents are more likely to consider "not enough friends", a problem. However,this variable was retained on the basis of face validity. As well, it was significant with TV watching as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.3

Correlations of Age and Problems Attributed to Elderly People.

VARIABLES	CORRELATION *	SIG. LEVEL
Not enough job opportunities	-.1417	.01
Not feeling needed	-.1168	.01
Not enough medical care	-.0585	.01
Keeping busy, a problem	-.0327	not sig.
Loneliness, a problem	-.0250	not sig.
Money to live, a problem	-.0110	not sig.
Fear of crime, a problem	-.0046	not sig.
Not enough friends	.0054	not sig.
Poor housing, a problem	.0067	not sig.
Not enough clothing	.0186	not sig.
Poor health, a problem	.0346	not sig.
Not enough education	.1153	.01
N = 3037		

* Rank ordered starting with the most negative correlation and using full age range. This is criterion 2 in Table 4.4

Table 4.4

Rank Ordering of "Problem" Variables.

PROBLEMS ATTRIBUTED TO ELDERLY PEOPLE	RANKING ACCORDING TO CRITERION* 1 and 2		MEAN of criterion 1 and 2
1. Not having enough money to live a problem.	6	7	6.5
2. Poor health, a problem.	9	11	10.0
3. Loneliness a problem.	2	5	3.5
4. Poor housing a problem.	4	9	6.5
5. Not enough clothing a problem.	12	10	11.0
6. Keeping busy a problem.	5	4	4.5
7. Fear of crime a problem.	10	7	8.5
8. No friends a problem.	8	8	8.0
9. Not feeling needed a problem.	1	2	1.5
10.Not enough education a problem.	11	12	11.5
11.Not enough job opportunities a problem.	3	1	2.0
12.Not enough medical care a problem.	7	3	5.0

* Ranking 1 indicates the greatest discrepancy between problems attributed to elderly people and problems experienced by them.

Table 4.4 shows the rank ordering of the variables according to these two criteria together with a "mean" rank (the mean of the placement of the variable for the two criteria, in terms of the largest discrepancy). The variables with the lowest mean ranks will be chosen as they represent the variables with greatest discrepancies. On the basis of these two criteria, the variables related to poor health, not enough clothing and not enough education, as problems for elderly persons, were remove as potential variables for the index. The discrepancies were too small to constitute stereotyping. The mean ranks for these variables, shown in Table 4.4, are 10, 11 and 11.5.

To test construct validity, another criterion was used in selecting the stereotyping variables. As this study is interested in the effects of television, this criterion focused on whether the problem variables were significant with TV watching. Analysis of variance of each of the problem variables on TV watching showed that two variables came close to significance "Loneliness" ($p = .0793$), "Not feeling needed" ($p = .0894$), while three were significant "Keeping busy", "Not enough friends", and "Not enough job opportunities". These significance levels are shown in Table 4.5.

On the basis of the criteria discussed the following variables were chosen for the stereotyping index:

1. Loneliness, a problem for older people
2. Keeping busy, a problem for older people
3. Not enough friends, a problem for older people
4. Not feeling needed, a problem for older people
5. Not enough job opportunities, a problem for older people

Correlation analysis showed that the chosen variables correlate well with one another, with the correlations ranging from .2188 - .5479. Table 4.6 shows the correlations. These five items produced a relatively strong alpha level of .7682. All of

Table 4.5.

Significance Levels of Anovas of Individual Problems Variables and TV watching.

PROBLEMS ATTRIBUTED TO ELDERLY PEOPLE VARIABLES	SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL
Money to live, a problem	.1530
Poor health, a problem	.7581
Loneliness, a problem	.0793*
Poor housing, a problem	.1437
Not enough clothing, a problem	.2301
Keeping busy, a problem	.0423*
Fear of crime, a problem	.2125
Not enough friends, a problem	.0017*
Not feeling needed, a problem	.0894*
Not enough education, a problem	.9672
Not enough job opportunities, a problem	.0050*
Not enough medical care, a problem	.9691

* These are the variables selected for the stereotyping index. This criterion is based on the significance levels of the problem variables with TV watching.

Table 4.6

Correlations of Variables in the "Problems Attributed to Elderly People" Index.

VARIABLE	CORRELATIONS				
Loneliness	1.000				
Keeping busy	.4162	1.000			
Not enough friends	.4004	.4611	1.000		
Not feeling needed	.5052	.5139	.5479	1.000	
Job opportunities	.2188	.3166	.3132	.3757	1.000
	Loneliness	Keep busy	Friends	Needed	No jobs

these variables have face validity, all relate predominantly to psychological factors which will be the focus of this study, and all of them react in the same direction with the TV watching.

A comparison of the problems index with indexes used in earlier research indicates that the new index has more face validity than the knowledge index used by Gerbner et al. They used knowledge as it related to facts about older people such as longevity, health and number of older persons compared to 10 to 20 years ago. Figure 3.2, Chapter III shows a conceptual model of the relationship of knowledge to stereotyping of aging. In the literature, knowledge alone is never considered as a measure of stereotyping of older people. It is considered only in terms of how it can affect attitudes. There is also some question as to the reliability of this index as correlation analysis of the knowledge index variables showed weak correlations of .1708 and .2731. Only 'health' and 'number of older persons compare to 10 to 20 years ago' showed an acceptable correlation of .4322.

The attitude index used in previous research has better face validity than the knowledge index. However, attitude confounds the cohort of existing elderly persons with the state of old age. In addition, this index shows problems in discriminant validity. Correlation analysis showed a significant positive correlation (.2028) between attitudes toward 'self' (an index was created relating to attitudes toward 'self') and attitudes toward the 'elderly'. The more positive the attitude toward oneself, the more positive the attitude toward elderly persons. An index was also created using the 'problems' variables in relation to self. The correlation between 'problems attributed to self' and 'problems attributed to elderly persons' was not significant (.0459), indicating that the items have discriminant validity. This suggests that the respondent is not projecting his/her own problems to older people.

The knowledge and attitude indexes, used in previous research, also showed low correlations with TV watching suggesting a problem of construct validity. Correlation analysis showed a stronger relationship between TV watching and the problems index (-.1079) than between TV watching and the previous stereotyping variables used by Gerbner et al (1980); knowledge index (-.0640) and attitude index (.0264). Finally, correlation analysis of the problems index and the two criteria of stereotyping used in the previous research indicated that the stereotyping index for this study shows a stronger correlation with Gerbner's attitude index than the correlation between the two indexes that Gerbner et al (1980) used. These correlations are shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7.

Correlations of "Stereotyping of Elderly Persons" Indexes.

CORRELATIONS			
	Knowledge Index	Attitude Index	Problem Index
Knowledge Index	1.0000		
Attitude Index	.1134	1.0000	
Problem Index	-.0073*	.2002*	1.0000

*The signs of these correlations have been changed to provide a appropriate comparison. This was necessary because of the scoring of the problems index.

Table 4.8 shows the frequency distribution for the problems index. The 'problems index' is scored so that a higher score indicates a more serious problem, i.e. problems were rated 1. hardly serious 2. somewhat serious and 3. very serious. The scores for the index rank from 5 - 15, with a higher score indicating a more serious problem. Approximately

12.2% of the sample considered problems of elderly people, not serious whereas 49,3% considered the problems somewhat serious and 38.5% considered them to be very serious. The variables in the problems index have not been used before as measures of stereotyping of elderly persons in relation to television.

Table 4.8.

Frequency Distribution for Problems attributed to 65+ Index.

Score	Problems to 65+	
	Count	% of total
5	37	2.8
6	26	2.0
7	41	3.1
8	57	4.3
9	101	7.7
10	176	13.4
11	181	13.8
12	189	14.4
13	191	14.5
14	136	10.3
15*	180	13.7

(*Higher score more serious problem)

Symbolic Social Reality Variables (Independent Variables)

As indicated in Chapter II, multiple symbolic social reality measures, such as active vs inactive viewing and selective vs habitual viewing would have been desirable but were not available in the Harris (1975) data. The variables to be used for this study will measure exposure to TV only. As discussed in the review literature, most content analysis studies suggested that television presents a predominantly negative view of older people. If we assume that television has an influence then heavy viewers will be more likely to incorporate the television-world view into their own view of aging and the aged. The TV variables operationalized for this study will include answers to:

How much time do you personally spend watching TV?

1. Hardly any at all 24.4%
2. Some but not alot 51.6%
3. A lot[1] 24.0%

and: How much time did you spend yesterday watching TV?

1. More than 5 hours (5.2% of the sample)
2. Five hours (4%)
3. Four hours (7.5%)
4. Three hours (14.9%)
5. Two hours (25.6%)
6. One hour (23%)
7. None (13.2)
8. Not sure
9. Don't do[2] (6.6%)

---

[1]There are some problems to be aware of in interpreting TV watching, as these categories of viewing could vary according to different norms.

[2]This category in the Harris data come from category 1, "Don't do" in response to another TV question which asks "How much time do you spend watching TV?"

Missing values in the "not sure" category, which included only 24 respondents, were removed. The non-viewers category for this study accounted for only 6.6% of the sample. A dummy variable was created for non-viewers[1] and regression analysis of non-viewers on the problems index showed no significant findings. That is, there is no difference between viewers and non-viewers. This category will be eliminated from the study and the focus will be only on those individuals who watch TV.

The "amount of TV watched yesterday" variables was recoded into categories;

1. less than 2 hours watched yesterday.
2. 3-5 hours watched yesterday.
3. more than 5 hours watched yesterday.

This variable did not correlate significantly with the 'problems index' or any other variables in the model and as result was not used to create a TV index as Gerbner et al (1979) had done in their research. The face validity of this variable was questionable as it was too specific (in asking the amount of TV watched yesterday) and perhaps not appropriate as an overall measure of TV watching. TV watched yesterday will not be used as a measure of TV watching.

Subjective Social Reality Variables (Mediating Variables)

The subjective social reality variables will be primarily operationalized as mediating variables on the relationship between TV viewing and stereotyping of elderly people. The objective social reality will examine demographic differences. The subjective social reality variables include 'perception of media treatment of elderly people', 'contact with elderly people', psychological well-being and life satisfaction. The respondent's perception of the way older people are presented on television was operationalized as a subjective social

[1]Non-viewers is response category 9 that is "don't do" for the question "How much time did you spend yesterday watching TV?

reality variable as described in Chapter III. As it is a TV related variable, it will be presented first.

1. Perception of Media Treatment of Elderly People

The "Myth and Reality" data included nine items about the portrayal of elderly people on TV. Bivariate regression of TV watching on each of the media perception variables showed that three of the positive perception variables; elderly people are wise, elderly people are respectable, and elderly people are important were significant. None of the negative perception variables were significant. Analysis of variance, of the three levels of TV watching with each of the media perception variables showed that heavy viewers found the media portrayal of elderly people to be most positive.

Correlation analysis showed significant correlations (.1070 - .6671) between the TV perception variables. All of the variables will be included as part of the TV positive and the TV negative indexes as they have face validity. Factor analysis showed two factors, 4 negative and 5 positive media perceptions items. The negative items showed higher unscaled factor loadings of between .53780 and .66896, while the positive items ranged from .31569 to .45084. Two indexes were created and labelled 'TV positive' and 'TV negative'. 'TV positive' was associated with positive perception of media treatment, where the higher the score, the more positive the perception of television's treatment of elderly persons. The other was a negative index where the higher score indicated a more negative perception of media treatment of elderly persons. A low score on each of these scales represented a neutral view of TV's portrayal of elderly people. In other words, each of these indexes ranged from neutral perception to positive perception and neutral perception to negative perception. The TV negative and TV positive indexes produced alphas of .8377 and .7691.

The positive variables[1] are:

1. Television usually makes older people look successful at what they do.
2. Television usually makes older people look wise and full of good advice
3. On the whole television treats older people with respect.
4. Television usually makes older people look like they are an important part of their family.

The negative variables[2] are:

1. Television usually makes older people look old-fashioned and narrow-minded.
2. Television usually makes older people look sick and helpless.
3. Television usually makes older people look pushy and meddling into their family's business.
4. Television usually makes older people look untidy and not very pleasant to look at.
5. Television usually makes older people look useless and in everyone's way.

The response choices were;

1. Disagree strongly
2. Disagree somewhat
3. Agree somewhat
8. Not sure
9. Don't watch
0. Missing

Respondents who answered 9[3] and those in 0[4] category were removed from the sample. Correlation analysis of the TV positive and TV negative indexes and TV watching was significant, with the highest correlation between TV positive and TV watching (.1141).

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[1]The range of this scale is from 4 - 12, with 12 the most positive score

[2]The range of this scale is from 5 - 15, with 15 the most negative score

[3]This category was removed using the Midas missing value command, which automatically uses list wise deletions. This group of individuals which included 6.6% of the sample was omitted as this thesis will concentrate only on those who watch TV.

[4]The missing group accounted for about 1% of the sample. This category included such responses as "inappropriate, unascertained, unascertainable or ambiguous data categories" (Harris, 1975, VI).

In addition, two other TV perception variables were operationalized but tested separately from the indexes. The questions they presented were as follows:
On the whole, television programs show young people, not older people.

Table 4.9.
Frequency Distribution for "Programs show Young not Older People".

Response	Number of respondents
1. Disagree strongly	60
2. Disagree somewhat	206
3. Agree somewhat	504
4. Agree strongly	482
8. Not sure	74
9. Don't watch	96
0. Missing[1]	35

Respondents in categories 9, and 0 were omitted from the analysis (this was a total of 131 respondents) leaving respondents in four categories. Table 4.9 shows that 1252 respondents or 79% of the sample agreed to some extent that television programs show young not old people. This lends some support to the findings of the content analyses, discussed in Chapter I, of the underrepresentation of elderly characters. These variables will be examined for direct effects on stereotyping as well as mediating effects on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping of older people.

[1]The criteria used to define missing are not described in the Harris data.

The last TV perception measure was in response to:

Do you ever see older people in television programs or commercials that you particularly look up to or admire, or not?

Table 4.10

Frequency Distribution of "Seeing People 65+ that you Admire on TV".

Responses	Number of respondents
1. Don't see	488
2. See	684
8. Not sure	155[1]
9. Don't watch	96
0. Missing	34

The respondents who "don't watch" TV and whose answers were categorized as missing (according to the criteria described earlier in this chapter) were removed from sample. The frequency distribution in Table 4.10 shows that most of the respondents (684) saw elderly people they admired on television, contrary to the findings of content analysis studies which suggested predominantly negative portrayals. This variable will be examined for direct effect on stereotyping as well as mediating effects on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping.

[1]Respondents replying "Not sure" were included in the analysis because of the high frequency, however there were no statistically significant findings for this group.

2. Contact with Elderly People

The 'contact with elderly people' variables were operationalized using responses to the following questions:

Is either of your parents/grandparents over 65 years of age, or not?

Table 4.11 shows the frequencies which indicate that 26.5% of the sample have parents over 65, while only 19.2% have grandparents over 65.

In addition responses to the following questions were included:

When did you last see your parents?
When did you last see your grandparents?

These two variables were recoded so that response 1 and 6, as shown in Table 4.12, were combined in to category 1, so that the higher the number the less frequent the contact. This recoding was necessary for regression analysis. The respondents who were in the missing category were removed from the analysis. In addition, the group who have no parents/ grandparents was removed from the analysis, as the question of "frequency of contacts" relates only to those who have parents/grandparents. Table 4.12 shows the frequencies.

The last set of 'contact variables' classified as 'get help' and 'give help' variables included the responses to the following questions:

As you know, older parents/grandparents often help their children/grandchildren different ways. Do your parents or grandparents ever help you in the following ways?

Table 4.11

Parents/Grandparents over 65 years

Response choices	Parents	Grandparents
1. Over 65	386 (27.8%)	279 (20.1%)
2. Not over 65	431 (30.8%)	21 (1.5%)
9. NA: Respondent has no parents /grandparents	580 (41.4%)	1086 (78.4%)
0. Missing	60 (4.1%)	71 (4.9%)
Total Number	1397	1386

Table 4.12

Frequency of Contact with Parents/Grandparents

Frequency of contact	Parents		Grandparents	
1. Within last day or two	301	(21.5%)	51	(3.6%)
2. Within last week or two	218	(15.6%)	68	(4.9%)
3. A month ago	77	(5.5%)	61	(4.4%)
4. Two to three months ago	48	(3.4%)	24	(1.7%)
5. Longer than that	130	(9.2%)	97	(6.9%)
6. I live with them (volunteered)	47	(3.4%)	7	(.005%)
8. Not sure	0		0	
9. NA: Respondent has no parents	580	(41.4%)	1086	(78.4%)
0. Missing	56		63	
Total Number	1401		1394	

1. Family helps when someone is ill.
2. Family helps with kids.
3. Family gives advice on running the home.
4. Family advises on bringing up the children.
5. Family shops or runs errands for you.
6. Family gives you gifts.
7. Family helps out with money.
8. Family helps fix things around the house or keeps house for you.
9. Family gives you advice on job or business matters.
10. Family gives general advice on how to deal with some of life's problems.

As well the following question was asked of the respondents age 18-64 in relation to parents or grandparent age 65 years and older.

Do you ever help either your parents or grandparents in any of the following ways?

1. Respondent has parents or grandparents live with them.
2. Respondent helps family when someone is ill.
3. Respondent gives family advice on money matters.
4. Respondent helps family shop or run errands for them.
5. Respondent gives family gifts.
6. Respondent helps family keep house or fix things around the house for them.
7. Respondent gives family help with money matters.
8. Respondent takes family places such as the doctor, shopping, church.
9. Respondent gives family advice on running their home.
10. Respondent gives family advice on their job or business matters.
11. Respondent gives general advice on how to deal with some of life's problems.

The choices of responses were for these questions were:

1. Don't do
2. Do
3. No need/not applicable (volunteered
4. Not sure
9. NA; Respondent aged 18-64 has no parents/grandparents
0. Missing

Missing values 3, 4, and 0 were removed leaving three categories.

A dummy variable was created for those who 'get help' and those who 'give help' for each of the 'help' variables. Each of the ten 'get help' and eleven 'give help' variable were regressed on the problem index. The findings indicated that three of the 'gets help' and two of the 'gives help' variables came close to significance, but not in the predicted direction. That is, those who give or receive help were more likely to feel that elderly people had serious problems. The 'gets help' variables are as follows:

Family gives advice on running the home.
Family shops or runs errands for you.
Family helps out with money.

The 'gives help' variables are as follows:

Respondent gives help on money matters.
Respondent gives general advice on how to deal with some of life's problems.

Pearson's correlation analysis between these five variables showed low to moderate correlation (.0351 - .3897). Two indexes were created 'gets help' and 'gives help'. The correlation between these two indexes was low .1407, therefore each of the indexes will be examined separately. The 'gets help' variables showed correlations of between .2588 and .3855 with one another, whereas the two 'gives help' variables showed a correlation of .3987 with one another.

Table 4.13 examines the respondents who have parents over 65 as shown in Table 4.11 and related this group to the 'help' variables. An additional index was created to include grandparents, however the sample was very small and the findings were not significant. The 'help' variables will relate only to parents over 65. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

Table 4.13

Frequency of "Gives" and "Gets" Help from Parents over 65

RESPONSE CHOICES	GET	GIVE
1. Don't	182	25
2. Very little help	95	13
3. Moderate help	67	
4. Alot of help	33	10
Missing	9	338*
Don't have parents or no parents over 65	1398	1011

*Through an inadvertent error in the wording of the questions related to "gives help" whereby the questions were worded "Do you have parents "and" grandparents?" instead of "or" (Harris 1975;155), a large part of the sample was eliminated.

The variable relating to the age of the oldest adult in the household was also considered as a 'contact with elderly people' variable, but was dropped because of the high correlation .8021 with age. This would suggest multicollinearity, therefore using this variable would not add to the predictive powers of the model (Agresti & Finlay, 1986;322).

3. Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being was operationalized using the Bradburn Affect Balance Instrument. It was used as a continuous variable in the regression model, but was broken down categories to test for non-linearity. Five categories were created for this variable with category one including those individuals with the lowest psychological well-being and

category five including those with the highest psychological well-being. Table 4.14 shows a frequency distribution for the five levels of this variable with the scores ranking from 1 - 20. The distribution of scores is skewed to the right indicating that most people in the sample tend to have higher levels of psychological well-being.

Table 4.14.
Percentage Frequencies for Psychological Well- being.

PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING	CATEGORY* 1	2	3	4	5
% in each level	7.8	31.4	17.6	17.8	25.4
scores	>10	>14	>16	>18	<18

*category 1= lowest level

This variable will be examined for interaction[1] effects on the relationship between stereotyping and television; however direct effects of psychological well-being on the stereotyping (problem) index will be considered as well. The five categories allow for tests of both non-linearity and interaction. The five categories constitute the strata in the analysis of covariance test for non-linearity and interaction.

4. Life satisfaction

The respondent's life satisfaction was measured using the "Life Satisfaction Index". This index based on dichotomous items (agree-disagree) presents 11 positive and 7 negative statements. The Index is scored with 2 points given for agreement with a positive

[1]Interaction in terms of how or whether the different levels of psychological well-being affect the relationship between TV watching and the stereotyping (problem) index.

statement or disagreement with a negative statement, 1 point for each not sure or no answer and 0 points for each disagreement with a positive statement or agreement with a negative statement (Harris & Assoc., 1975;336). The scale is scored 1 - 36 with 1 equated to the lowest life satisfaction and 36 the highest life satisfaction. The index was also divided into five categories for this study in order to test for non-linearity and interaction. This variable was tested as a continuous variable in the regressions. Table 4.15 shows a frequency distribution for the Life Satisfaction Index.

Table 4.15.
Percentage Frequencies for Life Satisfaction.

LIFE SATISFACTION	CATEGORY*				
	1	2	3	4	5
% in each category	17.7	19.9	21.1	13.3	28.0
scores	>20	>26	>30	>32	<32

*category 1= lowest life satisfaction

Harris et al (1975;159) found that the median score for respondents age 18 - 64 was 28.3, while for respondents 65 years and older, it was only slightly less at 26.0 on the continuous 1 - 36 scale. The frequency distribution is skewed to the right with most respondents having higher levels of life satisfaction.

Objective Social Reality Variables (Control Variables)

The objective social reality variables include the social structural variables: age, education, income, gender and race. These variables were recoded into appropriate categories to provide more meaningful information in relation to the stereotyping (problem) index.

1. Age

Age was operationalized using the continuous age variable. In addition, age was recoded into three categories; the TV generation 18-34, the middle group 35-54, and the older group 55-64. In other analyses, these categories were subdivided into smaller age groups with a five years range in each group. This provided more detailed information related to the smaller groupings and indicated whether or not there were variations within the three age groups. If variations were found they were reported, otherwise analysis reflected findings related to the three age groups. There were 515 respondents in the TV generation group , 415 in the mid group, and 486 in the older group.

2. Education

Education was operationalized in Myth & Reality in nine categories and in answer to:

"Would you please look at this card and tell me which letter represents the highest grade of school that you actually completed?" (Harris and Associates, 1975:322)

1. No formal schooling (0 years)
2. First through seventh grade (1-7 years of school completed)
3. Eighth grade (8 years of school completed)
4. Some high school (9-11 years of school completed)
5. High school graduate (12 years of school completed)
6. Post high school vocational training
7. Some college (1-3 years of college completed)
8. Two year college graduate (completed two year community college, etc.)
9. Four year college graduate (completed 4 years of college)

10. Post-graduate (4 year college graduate and completed at least 1 year of graduate school)

The education categories were recoded to reflect the actual years in school 1, 4, 8, 10, 12 , 13, 14, 16, 18 and over. This permitted examination of this variable in more detailed within smaller categories. As well education was also collapsed to four categories[1], similar to those used in previous research, to test for non-linearity and interaction. This variable was useful in comparative results with previous findings.

3. Income

Income was operationalized in response to:

"Now, we need to know the total income for 1973 of ALL MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSEHOLD, including yourself (and spouse). Again, please look at this card and tell me which letter best represents all the money ALL THE MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSEHOLD either earned or received, such as from welfare, Social Security, pensions, stocks, bonds, real estate and other investments or income from a business before taxes in 1973." (Harris and Associates, 1975;317).

1. Under $1000
2. $1000 to $1999
3. $2000 to $2999
4. $3000 to $3999
5. $4000 to $4999
6. $5000 to $6999
7. $7000 to $9999
8. $10,000 to $14,999
9. $15,000 to $19,999
10. $20,000 to $24,999
11. $25,000 and over

[1]The four categories included individuals who had less than high school, high school, some college and a college degree.

If the respondent answered "not sure" or "refused" to answer , the interviewer estimated the total income. The income was estimated by the interviewer for approximately 25% of the respondents. Income was recoded to make the categories correspond to dollar amounts.

4. Gender

Gender was coded male 1. and female 2. The sample included 884 females (60.7%) and 573 males (39.3).

5. Race

Race was operationalized in response to a question about ethnic group or racial background. The response choices were and number of respondents in each group were;

1. White	(1222 respondents or 84.3% of the sample)
2. Black	(140 respondents or 9.7% of the sample)
3. Oriental	(9 respondents or .6% of the sample)
4. Spanish-American	(69 respondents or 4.8% of the sample)
5, Other	(9 respondents or .6% of the sample)
8. Not sure	(0 respondents)
0. Missing	(8)

The missing values were removed.

A dummy variable was created for blacks and whites. Whites accounted for 90.3% of the sample.

F. SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the sampling procedure, the data, some preliminary analyses and the operational definitions of the variables. A number of measures using frequency tables and correlations were used to describe some of the variables. Creation of indexes was discussed here as well. The preliminary results provided some interesting and

unexpected findings, such as the negative correlation between each of the problems variables and TV viewing. This relationship will be examined further in Chapter V using the 'problem index'. In Chapter V the preliminary findings in this chapter will be expanded using more effective statistical techniques. Statistical procedures such as multiple regressions, anovas and analysis of covariance will used to test the hypotheses developed in Chapter III.

V. TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

A. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to determine whether there is statistical support for the hypotheses presented in Chapter III. The first part of this chapter will describe the zero-order correlations between some of the model variables. Both the correlations of the dependent with the independent variables and the correlations between the independent variables will be described. The second part will report the results of the regression analyses in which stereotyping is the dependent variable. The basic regression model, which relates the stereotyping index for this thesis (that is, the discrepancy between problems attributed to elderly persons by those under 65 years of age vs problems experienced by elderly persons) to TV watching, will be presented. Sets of independent variables will then be added to see whether they alter the relationship between stereotyping and TV watching. The order of presentation of the independent variables will be the subjective social reality variables: 'perception of media portrayal of elderly people', contact with elderly people, psychological well-being, and life satisfaction, followed by the demographic variables: age, education, income, gender and race.

B. SUMMARY OF CORRELATIONS

The correlations for the model, measured by Pearson's correlation coefficient, range from .0053 to .4342 and are shown in Table 5.1. As expected, the correlations of the independent variables with the dependent variable (the discrepancy between problems attributed to elderly people by those under 65 years of age vs problems experienced by elderly people) are low which is typical for studies related to stereotyping and television effects. The correlations yield some unexpected findings.

Table 5.1
Pearson Correlation* Coefficients for the Model Variables

PROBOLD	1.0000										
WATCHTV	-.1022	1.0000									
TVNEG	.1042	-.0310	1.0000								
TVPOS	-.0378	.1181	-.3986	1.0000							
TVPTVW	-.0896	.8852	-.1941	.5386	1.0000						
GET HELP	.0332	.0394	.0247	.0182	.0410	1.0000					
GIVE HELP	.0821	-.0259	-.0013	.0202	-.0174	.0755	1.0000				
R'S AGE	-.1636	-.1668	-.1802	.1257	.1939	-.0058	.0220	1.0000			
R'S PSYC	-.1443	-.0727	-.1190	.0847	-.0330	.0106	-.0195	.0961	1.0000		
R'S LIFE	-.1026	-.1620	-.0885	-.0151	-.1428	-.0100	.0458	-.1448	.4342	1.0000	
YSCHOOL	.0740	-.2260	.0066	-.1813	-.2662	-.0134	.0053	-.3354	.1383	.2706	1.0000
	PROBOLD	WATCHTV	TVNEG	TVPOS	TVPTVW	GET HELP	GIVE HELP	R'S AGE	R'S PSYC	R'S LIFE	YSCHOOL

* ON = 698 DF = 696 R@ .05 = .0742 R@ .01 = .0974

The most interesting result is the small negative but significant correlation of TV watching and the stereotyping index for this thesis.

This correlation shows that, contrary to the main argument of this study, the more an individual watches TV, the less he/she sees old age as a problematic time. The result is the opposite of the one predicted by cultivation hypothesis and by previous research. However, as described in Chapter I and Chapter III, Cultivation Hypothesis, previous research is weak. In addition, the measure of stereotyping, as discussed in detail in Chapter IV, Social Reality Effects, has dubious validity. The correlation of stereotyping and TV watching is low, (-.1022) supporting the findings that direct effects of TV in relation to stereotyping of elderly people are limited.

Table 5.1 shows that perception of portrayals of elderly people on TV, as positive versus neutral and negative versus neutral, show low correlations with stereotyping (.1042 and -.0378). The correlation of the index of negative portrayal and the stereotyping index is significant and shows that individuals who see TV portraying older people negatively are more likely to stereotype. The correlation of the index of positive portrayal and stereotyping, while in the expected direction, (more positive perception, less stereotyping) is not significant. The correlation of TV watching and TV positive perception is significant and positive (.1181). It shows that heavy TV watchers are more likely to see elderly characters portrayed positively on television. The correlation of these two indexes is significant and negative (-.3986). Although the correlation is relatively high, it is not high enough to conclude that the indexes are measuring the same thing.

The variables related to contact with elderly people also yield unexpected correlations. Only contact in terms of help given to older people showed a significant and positive correlation with stereotyping index (.0821). The more help given, the more

stereotyping in terms of problems attributed to elderly persons. The unexpected direction of this correlation could be due to the nature of the contact with elderly people which involves helping situations. These relationship will be examined in more detail in subsequent sections.

Data summarized in Table 5.1 shows a strong positive relationship between psychological well-being and life satisfaction (.4622). The relationship between these two variables with stereotyping and TV watching is significant and negative[1]. The negative correlations, as shown in Table 5.1 show that higher levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction are related to less TV watching and less stereotyping,

Table 5.1 shows a significant negative correlation between age and problems attributed to older people (-.1636) and a significant positive relationship between age and TV watching (.1668). This is consistent with previous research and contact hypothesis that suggests younger respondents are more likely to stereotype elderly people. These relationships will be examined further in later sections of this chapter. By contrast, the findings in relation to stereotyping and education present an interesting anomaly. Contrary to previous research, the correlation, although small, is positive (.0740), indicating that individuals with a higher education are more likely to stereotype.

The low correlations between the dependent and the independent variables suggest that other variables, which will be discussed in Chapter VI, Future Research, should be considered as predictors of stereotyping of elderly people. The low intercorrelations among the independent variables show that spuriousness should not be a problem. The independent variable shown in Table 5.1 as TVP*TVW is the interaction term for TV

[1]The correlation of psychological well-being and TV watching is almost significant (-.0727).

watching and the TV positive perception index. Because only main effects are discussed in correlations, this variable will be discussed only in the context of the regression results. The next section will examine the variable relationships in more detail in relation to the hypotheses presented in Chapter III.

C. TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

Television and Stereotyping: Cultivation Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1. Stereotyping of elderly people will increase as TV watching increases.

The regression slope of the stereotyping index (problems attributed to the elderly) on TV watching is significant (p=.0003)[1] and negative -.36592. The negative sign means that as TV watching increases, the attribution of serious problems to the elderly decreases[2]. Analysis of variance showed that a linear relationship exists between the stereotyping index (problems attributed to elderly people) and TV watching, with the means for problems attributed to elderly people decreasing as the amount of TV watching increased.

There is no statistical support for Hypothesis 1, cultivation hypothesis, that as TV watching increases stereotyping of elderly people increases.

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[1]The p-value is the probability of getting the observed value of the slope (or some more extreme value) when the null hypothesis is true.

[2]Specifically, for a one unit increase on the three point scale of TV watching (more watching) there is approximately a one third of a unit decrease in the mean of seriousness of problems attributed to elderly people. The scale of problems attributed to elderly people is an 11 point scale

Mediating Variables

Hypothesis 2-- **a. Those who see television's portrayal as positive will have a positive perception of elderly people.**

b. The perception of the portrayal of elderly people on television will have a conditioning[1] effect on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping of elderly people.

Table 5.2 shows the regression coefficients for TV watching and the TV perception indexes on stereotyping. When TV positive perception and TV negative perception were added to the regression the negative effect of TV watching on stereotyping remained. The finding show support for Hypothesis 2a. The more positive the respondent perceives TV's portrayal of elderly people, the less serious the problems attributed to them, whereas more negative perceptions related to more serious problems attributed to older people. The number of respondents was 945 out of the total sample of 1457. Those who did not watch TV, those who answered "not sure", and actual missing values accounted for the drop in the size of the sample. The three TV related variables accounted for only 2% of the variance.

The two 'media perception' variables were tested to see whether they interact with TV watching. Analysis of covariance[2] indicated the slopes of stereotyping on TV watching differed significantly across four categories of the TV positive perception index, created for the purpose of the analysis. Inspection of the slopes suggested that the slopes increase in value from a relatively large negative value to a small positive one as the categories of the

[1]Conditioning in terms of interaction, that is, the association between TV watching and stereotyping, in terms of problems attributed to elderly people, will change according to the perception of the portrayal of elderly people on television.

[2]Analysis of covariance is fully described in Chapter IV, Section C.

index change from low positive perception (which is interpreted as neutral) to high positive (TV portrays elderly characters positively). A new variable was created which was a cross product of TV watching and the continuous TV positive perception index. This new variable was added to the regression equation and was found to be significant as shown in Table 5.2.

Analysis of covariance showed that the slopes of stereotyping on TV watching did not differ significantly across categories of TV negative perception, created for this analysis. Consequently, when the interaction term of TV watching and TV negative perception was added to the regression equation, it was not significant. No comparable interaction term for this variable was added to the model. Interaction effects relate only to those who saw television's portrayal of elderly people in the range from neutral to highly positive.

In order to interpret this interaction, a means table, Table 5.3, was created using the regression slopes shown in Table 5.2[1]. This table shows the fitted means of the dependent variable for selected values of TV watching and the TV positive perception index. It shows that the more positive the media portrayal of elderly people is perceived to be, the less the difference between light and heavy viewers. Table 5.3 shows the difference in means of problems attributed to elderly persons between light and heavy viewers. Those who felt

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[1]These values were substituted into the following formula to produce the values shown in Table 5.3:
Y(hat)= 13.867-1.9567(v238, 3 values 1,2,3,)-.21589(v2001, mean, 1 standard deviation and 2 standard deviations above & below) + .12358(TV pos*TV watching)+.050396(mean of TVneg)

This formula includes the intercept (13.867) , the product of the slope for TV watching and the 3 categories of TV watching, the product of the slope of the TV positive perception index and the mean of TV positive perception index and 2 standard deviations above and below, the slope for the interaction term, the product of the slope for TV negative perception and the mean of TV negative perception. These values are used to the predict the mean of the 'problems attributed to elderly people' index (stereotyping) for the different categories shown in Table 5.3

Table 5.2

Regression Coefficients for the TV Related Variables on the Problems Index.

VARIABLES	REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS	SIGNIFICANCE LEVELS [1]
TV Watching	-1.9567	.0026
TV Positive Perception Index[2]	-.21591	.0508
Interaction term (TV positive* TV watching)	.12358	.0163
TV Negative Perception Index[3]	.0504	.0559
INTERCEPT	13.867	
R square = .024 N = 945 out of 1457		

[1] All significance levels are one tailed.
[2] The range for this index is from 4 - 12, with 12 the most positive response.
[3] The range for this index is from 5 - 15, with 15 the most negative response.

that elderly people were portrayed in a highly positive manner showed a difference of -.34, while those who saw them portrayed in a more neutral manner showed a difference of -1.47. As the fitted means show, the effect of TV watching is strongest for those with a neutral view of TV's portrayal of elderly people. Light viewers, who have this view, attributed the most serious problems to the elderly people, whereas heavy viewers with the same view, attributed the least serious problems to elderly people.

Another way of looking at the interaction is to focus on the effect of perceived portrayal on stereotyping. Table 5.3 shows that among heavy viewers, those who see elderly characters as positively portrayed are more likely to stereotype than those who see elderly characters portrayed in a neutral manner. By contrast, light viewers are less likely to stereotype as perception of TV portrayals changes from neutral to positive. The findings support Hypothesis 2 that perception of TV portrayal of the elderly has a conditioning[1] effect on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping index, only for light viewers[2]. These findings were opposite to the findings of Gerbner et al (1979;26) who found that those who watched the most television and found television's treatment of older people to be neutral were most likely to stereotype.

The main focus for the remainder of this chapter is to see whether the negative effect of TV watching on stereotyping, particularly as it manifest itself among those with a neutral view of the portrayal of elderly people, persists when we control for other variables.

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[1]Conditioning, in terms of the more positive the the perception of the TV portrayal, the less the effect of TV watching on the stereotyping index.

[2]The two remaining TV perception variables, discussed in Chapter IV, were not part of the indexes as they did not relate to positive or negative portrayals. They were tested individually with TV watching and problems attributed to elderly people. There were no statistically significant findings for the responses to the questions: "On the whole, television shows older not younger people?"($p = .2995$) and "Do you ever see older people in television programs or commercials that you particularly look up to or admire?" ($p = .4730$). They were not included in the model.

TABLE 5.3 (INTERACTION MODEL)
Fitted Means of the Problems Index for Selected Values of
TV watching and the TV Positive Index.

PERCEPTION OF TV PORTRAYAL	TV VIEWING			Difference in Means Between Heavy and Light Viewers
TV POSITIVE PERCEPTION INDEX	HARDLY (Light viewer)	SOME	LOTS (Heavy viewer)	
2 s.d. above mean**	11.49	11.60	11.70	.21
HIGH POSITIVE PERCEPTION	11.70	11.53	11.36	-.34
MEDIUM POSITIVE PERCEPTION	11.91	11.46	11.01	-.90
LOW POSITIVE (NEUTRAL PERCEPTION)	12.12*	11.39	10.65	-1.47
2 s.d. below mean**	12.33	11.31	10.29	-2.04

*High values represent more serious problems attributed to elderly people (a more negative view of elderly people)
** The number of cases at these extremes is very small.

Hypothesis 3-- **a. The primary effects of contact with elderly people will be the reduction of stereotyping.**

b. 'Contacts with elderly people' will have a mediating effect on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping of elderly people.

The interaction effects described in Table 5.2 remain when the 'contact with elderly people' variables, as shown in Table 5.4, are added to the interaction model. The variables related to grandparents are not significant while those related to parents are statistically significant at the .01 level. Individuals who have no parents over 65, which is 72.2%[1] of the sample are less likely to stereotype. Contact in terms of "when last saw parents" shows a significant (p = .0198) and negative slope (- .05654). As this variable is coded 1 - 6 with 1 indicating the most frequent contact the negative slope shows that individuals with more frequent contact are more likely to stereotype i.e. attribute serious problems to elderly people.

Table 5.4a shows the partial slopes for the frequency of contact categories. Most of the slopes are significant and positive, supporting the findings from Table 5.4; the more frequent the contact, the more serious the problems attributed to elderly people. The exception is the category 'parents are dead'[2] which show a significant (p = .0004) and negative slope (-.50717). The negative slope indicates that those individuals whose parents are dead are less likely to stereotype. Individuals in this sample, who do not have parents, are old and are less likely to the stereotype. The relationship does not hold when age is added so these variables are not included as 'contact' variables in the study model.

Additional 'contact' variables relating to getting help from, and giving help to, elderly family members were examined in relation to the interaction model. Variable

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[1]See Table 4.11, Chapter IV, 27.8% have parents over 65.
[2]This category was 41.4% of the sample as is shown in Chapter IV, Table 4.12.

Table 5.4.
Multiple Regression Coefficients of the Contact Variables in the Interaction Model of the TV related Variables

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	SLOPES	SIG. LEVELS
Last saw parents**	-.05654	.0198*
Last saw grandparents**	-.01599	.6184
Has parents over 65 1= yes 0=no	-.06354	.0053*
Has grandparents over 65	.00103	.9635
Parents are dead***	-.46753	.0062
TV watching	-1.9694	.0024
TV Positive Perception Index	-.23242	.0352
TV Negative Perception Index	.04861	.0642
Interaction TV Pos*TV watching	.13726	.0074
INTERCEPT	14.472	-
R - Square = .03 N= 925 out 1457		

*When control for age was added these variables were not significant.
**Coded 1 - 6 with 1 indicating the most frequent contact. Table 5.4a show the partial regression slopes of the categories of this variable.
*** This category is coded 9 in "Last saw parents"

Table 5.4a.
Multiple Regression Coefficients of the Categories of "Last Saw Parents" and Stereotyping of Elderly People.

VARIABLE "Last saw parents "	PARTIAL SLOPES Intercept (11.213)	SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL
Within last day or so	.39916	.0310
Within last week or so	.58431	.0050
A month ago	.80117	.0110
Two or three months ago	.32216	.4168
Longer than that	.67617	.0084
I live with them	.10546	.7882
Parents are dead	.50717	.0004

Reference category - Parents under 65

srelated to situations where the respondent 'gets help' from an elderly family member showed no statistically significant findings when put into the interaction model as shown in Table 5.5. However, where help is given to the elderly family member, there were significant findings. The slope for the 'gives help index'[1] is significant (p = .0366) and positive (1.0767)[2]. The more help that is given the more likely the individual is to attribute serious problems to older people in the interaction model. Due to the nature of the variable, this is a reasonable finding as the contacts are in response to actual problems that exist related to 'giving help' with money and giving advice on problems.

The relationship was examined further to include the category of individuals who do not have parents, as a comparison group. This was done by creating a dummy variable from another variable question in the survey. There were statistically significant results indicating that those with no living parents were less likely to stereotype than those who had contact with elderly parents in a helping manner. Table 5.6 shows the fitted means for problems attribute to elderly people. Those who don't help or help a little are less likely to stereotype than those who don't have parents, however those who help alot are the most likely to stereotype.

There is no support for Hypothesis 3a. Table 5.4 shows that the less frequent the contact the less likely the individual is to stereotype. There is some support for Hypothesis 3b that "contact with elderly people will have a mediating effect (but not with respect to TV watching) on stereotyping". This effect is limited to those individuals who give "little" or

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[1]There is a problem with this index, which as described in Chapter IV, is due to the wording of the question. It appears that the question was worded so that only those who had parents and grandparents (rather than parents or grandparents) alive at the time of the survey responded to the questions. The result was a small sample.

[2]For a one unit increase in the 'gives help index', there 1.0167 increase in the stereotyping index (problems attributed to elderly people).

Table 5.5.
Multiple Regression Coefficients of the 'Give' and 'Get' Help* Indexes as Contact Variables in the Interaction Model.

VARIABLE	REGRESSION COEFFICIENT	SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL
Gets help index	.30986	.4945
Gives help index	1.0767	.0366
TV watching	-1.8305	.0142
TV Positive Perception Index	-.21034	.0924
TV Negative Perception Index	.07371	.0146
Interaction TV Pos*TV watching	.11720	.0471
INTERCEPT	13.134	-
R square = .04 N= 703 out of 1457		

*The help questions apply only to those individuals who have parents. Table 5.6 brings in the group of respondents who have no parents for a comparison.

Table 5.6
Fitted Means for Problems Attributed to Elderly People and "Help Given"

HELP GIVEN	MEAN for "PROBLEM INDEX"[1]
None	9.604
A little	10.766
Alot	11.929
Has no parents (parents dead)	11.434*

*higher score indicates more serious problems

[1]The means are calculated with values from the regression model of stereotyping on gives help, has parents over 65 and age using the formula Y(hat) = 11.958 (intercept) + 1.1623 (3 values of gives help and has no parents) - 1.031 (slope of parents over 65) - .0294 (age).

"no" help to their elderly family members. This contact group stereotyped less than those who had no contact i.e. those who had no parents.

Hypothesis 4-- **a. Stereotyping will be lower in individuals who have higher levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction.**

b. Psychological well-being and life satisfaction will have a mediating effect on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping.

The psychological well- being and life satisfaction variables were examined together because of their high correlation and because they exhibit the same pattern of correlations with stereotyping and TV watching. They will, however, be tested separately in the interaction model to examine any possible differences and for interaction effects. Table 5.7 shows that the effect of psychological well-being is significant (p = .0001) and negative (-.09008) when introduced into the interaction model. The greater the psychological well-being the less serious the problems attributed to older people (stereotyping)[1]. Table 5.8 shows that life satisfaction was also significant (p = .0476) and negative (-.02329) when introduced into the interaction model[2]. The higher the levels of life satisfaction the less serious the problems attributed to elderly persons (stereotyping). The interaction term (TV watching*Tv positive index) remained significant (p = .0229 and p = .0146) when these variables were added to the interaction model. There is support for Hypothesis 4a that "stereotyping will be lower in individuals who have higher levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction." These results are shown in Table 5.7 and 5.8. These effects

[1]For a one unit increase in psychological well-being there is a .09008 decrease in the stereotyping index.
[2]For a one unit increase in life satisfaction, there is a .02329 decrease in the stereotyping index.

Table 5.7.

Multiple Regression Coefficients of Psychological Well-being in the Interaction Model.

VARIABLE	REGRESSION COEFFICIENT	SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL
Psychological well-being	-.09008	.0001
TV Watching	-1.8904	.0034
TV Positive Perception Index	-.19486	.0762
TV Negative Perception Index	.04905	.0609
Interaction TV Pos*TV watching	.11628	.0229
INTERCEPT	14.243	-
R - Square=	.044	
N=	945 out of 1457	

Table 5.8.

Multiple Regression Coefficients for Life Satisfaction in the Interaction Model.

VARIABLE	REGRESSION COEFFICIENT	SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL
Life Satisfaction	-.02329	.0476
TV Watching	-2.0090	.0020
TV Positive Perception Index	-.21986	.0464
TV Negative Perception Index	.04829	.0667
Interaction TV Pos*TV watching	.12542	.0146
INTERCEPT	14.742	
R - square = .033 N= 945 out of 1457		

did not change when these variables were included in the multiple regression of all the model variables as shown in Table 5.9.

Psychological well-being was tested for interaction using analysis of covariance. The test for equality of slopes was not statistically significant which suggests no interaction. However, inspection of the slopes suggested that the effect of TV watching might be reversed for those with the lowest level of psychological well-being. When the product term was introduced into the model to capture this interaction, it was not significant. Thus, the conclusion of no interaction stands[1]. Life satisfaction was also tested for interaction using analysis of covariance, The test for interaction of the null hypothesis was not statistically significant. The interaction term was added to the model and was not significant. There is no support for Hypothesis 4b, that psychological well-being and life satisfaction have a moderating effect on the relationship between TV watching and stereotyping of elderly people.

Demographic Variables

Hypothesis 5-- Heavy viewers of the 'TV generation' will attribute the most serious problems to elderly people.

The correlations (Table 5.1) showed there is a significant and negative relationship between age and stereotyping (-.1636) and a significant and positive relationship between age and TV watching. When age is added to the model, (Table 5.9) the slope is significant ($p = .0012$) and negative (-.02200)[2]. Analysis of variance with the residuals of the

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[1]Psychological well-being was also tested for interaction on the relationship between age and problems and no interaction effects were found.

[2]For a one year increase in age, there a 1/5 of unit decrease on the 11 point stereotyping index. The slope is small because of the large range in the age variable.

Table 5.9.
Standard Multiple Regression Coefficients of the
Model Variables on Stereotyping of Elderly People.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES	SLOPES	SIG. LEVELS
TV Watching	-1.7232	.0196
TV Positive Index	-.18413	.1378
Interaction effect TVpos*TVwatch	.11224	.0545
TV Negative Index	.04874	.1085
Contact with elderly people	1.2384	.0144
Psychological Well-being	-.06112	.0359
Life Satisfaction	-.03786	.0108
Age	-.02200	.0012
Education	.04734	.1629
Intercept	15.285	.0000
R - square .0774		

problems index and the five category age variable was not significant (p = .7896). That is, there were no significant differences in the means of the residual variables which indicates that there is no significant departure from linearity. When age is entered into the complete regression model, as is shown in Table 5.9, we find a significant (p = .0112) and negative slope (-.022), that is younger respondents are more likely to stereotype[1]. This could relate to their distance in age from older people. Even though the TV generation stereotyped more, there is no statistical support for Hypothesis 5 "that *heavy viewers* of the TV generation will attribute the most serious problems to elderly people". Age alone explained 2% of the variance in relation to problems attributed to elderly people.

Education, Income, Gender and Race

When education was added to the regression model, shown in Table 5.9, the positive relationship (.04736) remained, however it was not statistically significant (p =.1629). Although the effect is not significant, education is retained in the main model because of the direction of the relationship. The relationship is positive, that is the higher the education the more likely an individual is to stereotype according to the stereotyping index for this study. Theoretically and empirically, the expected correlation between education and stereotyping is negative. The relationship between education and problems attributed to elderly persons was tested for non-linearity. Analysis of variance with the residuals of the problems index and the continuous variable for education was not significant. This indicates that there is no significant departure from linearity. The findings showed that individuals with higher education, watch less TV, however are more likely to feel that elderly people have serious problems. This support the findings of the correlations. There is no support for Hypothesis 6a that "individuals with a higher

[1]Previous findings showed significant results for the 18-34 year age group in relation to knowledge of elderly persons, i.e. the more they watch TV, the less knowledge they have of elderly people. In relation to attitudes as a measure of stereotyping, there were no significant findings for any age group (Gerbner et al, 1980).

education will be less likely to stereotype elderly people for all levels of TV watching." In fact the reverse is true, that is, the more education the more likely the individual is to stereotype.

Income and gender showed no significant findings in relation to TV watching and stereotyping. These variables were not included in the final model.

When race was included in the model there were no statistically significant results for either blacks or whites. The dummy variable for blacks showed a significance level of $p = .1376$, while the dummy variable for whites showed a significance level of $p = .4174$. In other words, whites are no more likely than blacks to stereotype. Race was not included in the study model.

D. SUMMARY

One of the important and unexpected findings for this thesis is the negative relationship between TV watching and stereotyping. That is, as television viewing increases, stereotyping of older people decreases (less serious problems are attributed to the elderly). This relationship holds when simultaneous controls are added. Table 5.9 shows the multiple regression coefficients for the model variables with the slope for TV watching significant (.0196) and negative (-1.7232). Although the direct effects of TV watching accounted for only a small amount of the variance, the research is important because the findings are in the opposite direction of previous research. Heavy viewers are more likely to see elderly characters as portrayed positively which counters the generally accepted idea among social gerontologist that TV enhances the negative stereotype of the aged.

The final model shown in Table 5.10 presents the interaction effects of how elderly people are perceived to be portrayed on television on the relationship between TV

watching and stereotyping of elderly people, after controlling for the other variables that affect stereotyping. Although the differences are somewhat diminished, the pattern presented in Table 5.3 persists in Table 5.10. It represents one of the most important findings of this study. Light viewers with a neutral perception stereotype the most whereas heavy viewers with the same perception stereotype the least. Heavy viewers also stereotyped less (for each level of perception of media portrayal) than light viewers. This is in contrast to the findings of social gerontologists who suggest, through content analyses, that media portrayals of elderly people are predominantly negative and have a negative effect on heavy viewers. Table 5.10 shows that the interaction of TV watching and perception of TV portrayal on stereotyping holds when other independent variables are added to the model. However, the differences in effects between light and heavy viewers are not as pronounced in the final interaction model.

The criteria for the 'contact with elderly people' variables for this study related to helping situations associated with problems. As a result, it may not have been the best indicator of contact with elderly people. The 'help' variables presented some difficulties in relation to the contact hypothesis which have already been discussed. The effects of contact with older people showed that those who gave a little or no help to elderly parents were less likely to stereotype than those who gave alot of help or had no parents.

The demographic variables yielded some expected and some unexpected findings in relation to stereotyping of aging and elderly people. The findings related to age supported earlier findings that stereotyping of elderly people is negatively related to age. One explanation is that older respondents are more likely to have friends among older people, and are better able to see themselves as being in that age group. Findings in relation to education showed that individuals with higher education were more likely to stereotype for all levels of TV watching, however this was not significant in the final model.

Table 5.10. (FINAL INTERACTION MODEL)
Fitted Means of the Problem Index for Selected Values of TV watching and the "TV positive" Index based on the Entire Model.[1]

PERCEPTION OF TV PORTRAYAL	TV VIEWING			Difference in Means Between Heavy and Light Viewers
TV POSITIVE PERCEPTION INDEX	HARDLY (Light viewer)	SOME	LOTS (Heavy viewer)	
2 s.d. above mean[2]	11.63	11.79	11.83	.20
HIGH POSITIVE PERCEPTION	11.77	11.67	11.59	-.18
MEDIUM POSITIVE PERCEPTION	11.90	11.54	11.18	-.72
LOW POSITIVE PERCEPTION (NEUTRAL PERCEPTION)	12.02	11.38	10.78	-1.24
2 s.d. below mean	12.16[3]	11.25	10.35	-1.81

[1] This means table was constructed using regression slopes from the multiple regression model for this study which includes TV watching, TV positive index, interaction term for TV positive and TV watching, TV negative index, age, psychological well-being, education. The values for these slopes were substitued into the following formula;

Y (hat) = 15.170 (constant) - 1.7891 (3 values of TV watching) - .17432 (TV posivitive index, mean, and up to 2 st dev above and below) + .11774 (TV watching * TV positive index) + .06091 (mean TV negative index) - .018 (mean for age) - .097 (mean for psychological well-being) + .059 (mean for education).

[2] The number of cases at the extremes of 2 standard deviations above and below is very small.

[3] Higher values represent more serious problems attributed to elderly people.

Chapter VI will discuss the the general implications of these findings. In addition, some theoretical implications, methodological considerations and directions for future research will be presented .

VI. CONCLUSIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this study has been to explore the role of television, as symbolic social reality, in stereotyping of elderly people. The results show that the heavy viewing of television is not positively related to stereotyping of elderly people. In fact, there is an inverse relationship; that is, television viewing appears to reduce stereotyping effects in this sample of persons aged 18 - 64 years. Heavy viewers are less likely to stereotype than light viewers in terms of problems attributed to older persons. In addition, this effect is most pronounced for the individuals who view "the elderly" as being presented in a neutral manner on television. Among respondents who see older people portrayed in a neutral manner (rather than positive manner), heavy viewers stereotype substantially less than light viewers. Among respondents who see TV's portrayal as more positive, the direction of the relationship persists (except for the most extreme group) but the magnitude of the difference is reduced. Light viewers who view television's portrayal as neutral stereotype the most, whereas heavy viewers who see "the elderly" portrayed in the same manner stereotype the least. This pattern of differences remains, although the differences are somewhat diminished, when subjective and demographic variables are introduced. This model is suitable for future replication. The implications of these findings along with theoretical and methodological considerations are discussed in this chapter. Suggestions for future research are discussed in the concluding section.

B, GENERAL IMPLICATIONS

The Relationship between Television and Stereotyping

As argued in Chapter I, there are many contradictory findings in relation to television and stereotyping of elderly persons. Stereotyping of aging and old age is in itself

a complex issue which is difficult to explore as it involves many factors. Perhaps the reason that myths and stereotypes exist is because no single factor can be identified with aging. Elderly people represent a very diverse group.

Aging poses both real and imagined threats to important societal values such as freedom of choice, health, happiness and productivity. For example, older people serve as reminders of the loss of productivity associated with aging leading to decreased importance and ultimately death. If productivity is good, non-productivity cannot also be good. At the same time, a large portion of the general public is of the view that certain positive characteristics, such as wisdom, warmth, and goodness, increase with age (Atchley, 1988;274). Evidence of this is presented by the Harris survey (1975;48) findings that 82% of the general population believed that older people were friendly and warm, while 66% found them very wise from experience.

Gerontologists, however, have frequently focused on problems and negative images of "the elderly", thereby possibly contributing to the myths about aging. Many younger people have come to believe that older people have serious problems, even though older people do not consider their problems to be serious (Harris et al, 1975;142). This discrepancy could be the result of a lack of knowledge as indicated by Labouvie-Vief & Baltes (1975). The myth in respect to the perceived problems of elderly people was used in this study as a criterion for selecting the stereotyping variable.

People develop age related attitudes from a variety of sources. Newspapers, magazines and books represent other media forces that shape attitudes about aging. Even though people read selectively, whereas television viewing is assumed to be primarily nonselective, the effect of the press cannot be negated. (Allen & Hatchett, 1986;108). A content analysis of 1,703 news stories in two newspapers indicated that elderly people

were not presented as negatively and passively as some media critics had reported. The findings showed that while positive image stories outnumbered negative image stories 2:1, both newspapers the New York Times and the Oklahoman failed in the thoroughness of their coverage of the aging stories (Bucholz & Bynum, 1982). Newsweek magazine (February 22, 1988) in a cover story used such phrases as "older - but coming on strong" and the "grays on the go" to describe senior citizens and their "vigorous" lives.

Contact with elderly people provides another valuable source of information about aging. Empirical literature suggested that more contact results in less negative stereotyping. The effects of contact with elderly people in this study resulted in an increase in stereotyping, in terms of attributing more problems to them. The 'contact with elderly people' variables related to situations where elderly family members were being helped by a younger respondent. It would be reasonable to assume that a contact based on a helping situation would relate to a 'real' problem. The conclusion, then, depends on the nature of the contact.

Television is only one element of influence in a highly complex social system, with effects from it moderated by many factors. In addition, television's message is complicated and particularly so in relation to older people. Content analyses have found conflicting portrayals of older people; sometimes they are presented positively and sometimes negatively. Some of the content analytic studies in the review of literature found older people to be active and in good health (Peterson, 1973). Other studies found that in comparison to younger characters, older characters were more negatively portrayed (Gerbner et al, 1980).

Content analyses also found the elderly to be underrepresented leaving some question as to the capacity of television to shape the viewer's image of them. Perhaps

television can affect the image of a phenomenon only when the phenomenon is frequently represented. This could account for the fact that television effects are more pronounced in relation to violence and more conflicting in relation to the elderly.

The negative impact of television suggested by Gerbner et al (1980) appears to be another myth. The findings of this study indicate that an inverse relationship exists between television viewing and stereotyping of elderly persons. In addition, this relationship is mediated by how respondents see elderly people portrayed on television. Heavy viewers who see elderly people portrayed in a neutral manner are least likely to stereotype while light viewers who see them portrayed in the same way are most likely to stereotype. These pronounced differences could be a reflection of unfamiliarity with older people or perhaps the neutral viewers have a better and less biased understanding than those doing the content analyses. "Who makes the myths" is not answered in this study; however, the findings cast doubt on TV as one of the culprits.

Perhaps the statement made by Hess (1974;85) that the media have "thus far missed a truly big 'story', the emergence of a 'new breed' of old people," is incorrect. Maybe the "new breed" has been discovered and in fact was beginning to emerge in the the mid 70's, which could account for the sometimes negative and sometimes positive portrayals. Atchley (1988:275) reports that "contemporary television is moving toward a recognition of multigenerational relationships as a natural and interesting part of life." Elderly characters are often portrayed as successful individuals who serve as role models in family situations. Special program series devoted to aging are viewed more widely and stress both the realities and most positive aspects of aging.

There is evidence that attitudes toward elderly people have become more positive as this group grows in size and economic power. Even though much of the data in the

marketing value of various age groups is outdated and in need of research, the products advertised have started to adapt to the increasing number of elderly people who have a growing purchasing power (Kubey, 1982;29). Advances in medicine and the fact that people are more health conscious has ensured that older people are a growing group. Far from fading away, elderly people are becoming more involved.

Theoretical Considerations

The study of television and aging is relatively new and tends to be "data oriented" rather than "theory or model oriented" (Kubey, 1982;31). This study attempts to combine data analysis with theory by presenting the social reality variables in their theoretical framework and then operationalizing them for statistical analysis. The variables related to the three different types of reality (objective, subjective and symbolic) of the social construction of reality theory were specified to show the link between the theoretically defined variables and their empirical counterparts. Chapter II presented the theory, Chapter III the theoretically defined variables and a conceptual model, while Chapter IV focused on operationalization of the variables for empirical study.

The social construction of reality theory provides an excellent framework for media and particularly television studies. The theory is effective as it takes into account not only media factors but structural and social psychological factors as well. It examines the different interactions among the three types of realities and appears to be the best suited perspective for a complete understanding of the role of television in relation to other factors which influence our attitudes and beliefs. (Adoni & Mane, 1984;337). Television accounted for only a small amount of variance in relation to stereotyping. However, this low percentage of explained variance was consistent with the findings of all of the studies in this area. As social reality effects are gradual and cumulative, and influenced by multiple causes the small amount of variance accounted for by television is not surprising.

Methodological Considerations

A number of methodological issues some common to all social science research and others related to this study will be discussed. These issues are sometimes responsible for inaccurate or conflicting findings. One issue is related to identifying criteria for 'what constitutes a positive and realistic portrayal of aging'. Sensitive and realistic portrayals should not be demeaning while at the same time the real problems of aging should not be ignored. (Kubey, 1982;30). Content analysis is the best known method to assess the quality of the image of elderly characters on television, however, it is not always a valid method. It presents a number of shortcomings, such as how and when the content analysis is done. Subjective ratings occur when there is an insufficient number of raters[1]. In addition, researchers can only estimate the number of characters over a certain age as they are sometimes difficult to identify. In general, there appears to be too much variation in the methods and criteria used in content analysis with the attention focusing predominantly on manifest content at the expense of latent content meaning.

There is some question as to the generalizability of the stereotyping variables. This study has examined one set of variables as indicators of stereotyping but, as previously indicated, other variables have been used in past research. Chapter III and IV presented some strong evidence for choosing these variables, much stronger evidence than that presented by Gerbner et al (1980) in their choice. The variables chosen, relating to the discrepancy between the young and the old in attribution of problems to older people, produced findings opposite to the findings in past research. While more recent surveys, like Aging in the Eighties: America in Transitions, (Harris & Associates, 1981), indicate this discrepancy still exists new indicators of problems have been added. Longitudinal

[1]More raters provide multiple indicators and tests for inter-rater reliability can increase the reliability of the ratings.

research could examine the adequacy of 'problems of elderly people' as indicators of stereotyping using the new indicators. As well, other studies using different samples could be researched using the same criteria.

Multiple measures of television exposure that measure the degree of attention given to various types of programs would provide more reliable measures than the one item measure used in this study. Allen and Hatchett (1986;119) indicated that stronger social reality effects might be revealed with more adequate measures than are present with "the unreliability of the one-item measure used to represent exposure concepts." Future research should consider other TV related variables already mentioned such as active vs inactive viewing and selective vs habitual viewing and ways to effectively operationalize them. In addition, other media can be explored and compared instead of looking at television in isolation.

Ideally research should have access to at least two or more sets of data. Data should be available about the social structure, about the values of the general population, about values mediated by television and values of the controllers of the media content (Adoni & Mane, 1984;336). This study used demographic variables to examine the location in the social structure, stereotyping of "the elderly" studies to examine the values of the general population, content analytic studies to examine the media values, and limited studies related to those who control the media. Research related to the macro perspective of media control is complex and difficult to operationalize empirically, therefore the macro approach was discussed only at the theoretical level.

C. FUTURE RESEARCH

One of the continuing directions for future research is to attempt to assess the role of media in establishing, modifying and reinforcing the ideas we have. The media may play a role interpreting "reality", however, the nature of the process is difficult to interpret. It appears from this study that television, as a medium, is not a myth maker in creating negative images of aging and old age. However, there is need for future research, with more recent data , to continue to explore television's reaction to the "new breed" of older people. A more recent study by the National Council on Aging, Aging in the Eighties (Harris & Assoc, 1981), was released in the fall of 1987, however relevant media portrayal questions necessary for this thesis were omitted. There was information however, relating to viewing habits and the stereotyping variables used in this study. Very few studies have looked at this new data which, as indicated, provides interesting and updated information.

As the elderly age group expands and becomes a greater force future research will have to assess the television-world view of the aged in the 80's and the assess changes that have occurred. Schlossberg (1982;22) found that older adults were viewers watching the "life of the vigorous young and the underrepresented old." Changes appear to be occurring reflecting the changing demography but more effective content studies must be made. If those who control the media are convinced of the necessity of reflecting the changing demography, will or have the necessary changes been made? Has there been an increase in coverage of older people? How are they portrayed? Are they portrayed realistically; i.e. some happy, some not, some with problems and some without? The goal in the media-person relationship should be to treat everyone as individuals (Schlossberg, 1982;23) Some research has indicated that television seems to be moving toward more representative and accurate portrayals of elderly people in response to changing times but more research needs to be done (Atchley, 1988;266).

As elderly people are less likely than the young people to be involved in ongoing relationships, they are more likely to receive media messages without the opportunity to test their validity through conversations with others. The heavy reliance of many elderly persons on television presupposes extensive influence of television and its content on the attitudes and behaviors of elderly persons (Rubin, 1982;550). How then are elderly persons affected by television's message about themselves and other elderly persons? The data Myth and Reality of Aging provides information about elderly people's perception of themselves and other elderly persons. Research on elderly persons' assessment of their peers is surprisingly sparse. This approach presents a situation of "negative reference relationships"[1]. Allen and Hatchett (1986) used such an approach in a study of black's assessments of other blacks in relation to television and the print media. However, there was difficulty in operationalizing some of the variables. Self esteem for instance could be operationalized as a dependent or independent variable. Allen & Hatchett's (1986) methodology operationalizing self esteem as a dependent variable in their study of blacks perception of other blacks in relation to television and newspapers and found very limited results. Future research could examine this interesting approach in relation to the elderly.

Future research could also examine aging and old people in relation to the print media. In a content analysis, Bucholz and Bynum (1982;87) found that newspaper articles about older peoplefrom 1970 to 1978 "pictured the elderly more favorably than media critics might lead one to believe." In addition they found that "most stories presented a neutral image of the elderly, and, of the remainder, positive image stories outnumbered the negative stories 2:1." There has been very little analysis of how newspapers present "the

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[1] Rose (1962;11) defines negative reference relationships as those situations in which individuals are forced into having relationships against their own personal values, and as a result must act in accordance with the expectations for an individual in the relationship. For example, some adults may resent being classified as elderly and may feel offended by the related expectations and values associated with being elderly, possibly resulting in more negative attitudes. Negative reference relationships are often related to racial groups, such as blacks.

elderly" and their problems. Future research could examine this further in relation to how print media contributes to the construction of social reality in relation to aging and the aged and compare it to television.

Another area of research, as mentioned in relation to theoretical consideration, could examine the organizations and policies of mass media industry, particularly television. Rubin (1982;550) suggests a number of research questions which relate to this area of study. He suggests examining how television networks monitor their presentation of age-related issues or portrayals of elderly people to identify standards of content and how they relate to ratings of the programs. In addition, another important concern worth exploring, in relation to policies, is the question of access to the media in making oneself heard.

Cross cultural studies could provide information on television content in other countries which, in turn, could provide information for cross-cultural attitudes toward aging. There were very few studies of content of television in foreign countries. How much does culture affect our social reality? and: How much does culture affect what we see on television? A study on the images of old age in television drama in Israel (56 hours on a single channel, Israel Television, during seven weeks in 1977) found that elderly characters were represented in greater numbers than those reported in American studies. The majority of elderly characters were found to be middle or upper class and worked in professional or executive positions. (Shinar, 1980;51: Zemach & Cohen, 1986). The results could be compared with findings from Canadian and American studies to help in understanding the status of aging in different cultures. While cross-cultural factors were not examined in this study, future research could address this interesting and important issue.

Perhaps one of the most important areas of research should focus on effective content analysis to examine whether underrepresentation of elderly characters, especially elderly women, remains a problem as the 80's come to a close. Have the 80's accomplished for aging what the 60's and 70's accomplished for racism and sexism? Future research relating to the image and quality of life for the fastest growing minority, "the elderly", will inevitably be a benefit for everyone.

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